No proof found on Al-Ghozi collusion with jailers

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Palace exec told: Go back to the academe

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

EXASPERATED over the witness' flip-flopping, the head of a commission investigating the July 27 failed mutiny yester-

PALACE/ A6

BUTI HINDE PINAGTANIM NG KAMOTE

Gringo shows up at DOJ, Senate

Senator expresses faith in justice system

By Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. Gregorio Honasan surfaced yesterday after 29 days of being "inaccessible," but hinted that he was prepared to disappear again should the "wheels of justice fail to turn."

Honasan showed up at the Department of Justice in a silver colored BMW at around 2:30 p.m., accompanied by opposition Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Vicente Sotto III and tailed by security men in a white Toyota Corolla. He stayed there for about 15 minutes, and then proceeded to the Senate where he vowed to stay on as a senator with a responsibility to the "national constituency who elected" him.

The DOJ was then hearing the coup d'etat charge filed against him in connection with the July 27 mutiny of the Magdalo group at the Oakwood Premier building in Makati.

Wearing a light blue barong, Honasan said his appearance was a testament of his "faith" in the judicial system. But he did not file a reply to the charge against him; instead, his lawyer Daniel Gutierrez questioned the DOJ panel of prosecutors' jurisdiction over the case.

"I am here in good faith to express my willingness to submit myself to the system and be allowed to answer the charges that are being leveled against [me]," Honasan said before the DOJ

GRINGO/ A15

MISTAHS IN THE NEWS
Sen. Panfilo Lacson welcomes back his PMA 19[illegible] classmate Sen. Gregorio Honasan to the Senate. Lacson quipped this "photo op" will be captioned "The Mutineers." JESS YUSON

GOVERNMENT troops secure the Edsa Shrine on Ortigas Avenue following an alleged plot by followers of ousted President Estrada to occupy the place. JOAN BONDOC

Gov't deploys troops amid talk of Edsa IV

By TJ Burgonio

GOVERNMENT troops deployed to the Ortigas Center in Mandaluyong City yesterday maintained their positions to foil an alleged plot by supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada to mass there with the aim of "occupying" the Edsa Shrine and nearby buildings.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya cited intelligence information in confirming the supposed plot. "That's why we placed some men there. We have information that they would occupy the Edsa Shrine and even the adjoining buildings like the ADB (Asian Development Bank)," he said after delivering a pep talk to officers and enlisted personnel of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division at their headquarters in Tanay, Rizal.

"We had to preempt this," he added, but could not say which group was planning to stage mass actions and how many were involved.

From the 100 soldiers deployed to the area Tuesday night, less than 50 were still guarding the historic shrine as of 3 p.m. yesterday, according to Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, AFP public information officer.

He said the military was maintaining the blue alert raised Tuesday morning.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes

GOV'T/ A14

'PIDAL' PROBE

Mike, 12 others get subpoenas

By Michael Lim Ubac

THIRTEEN witnesses who were cited by Sen. Panfilo Lacson in his privileged speech have been subpoenaed by the Senate blue ribbon committee. But the principal witness—Eugenio Mahusay Jr.—is not among them.

This prompted Sen. Panfilo Lacson to ask Sen. Joker Arroyo, blue ribbon committee chair, to compel Mahusay, his erstwhile principal witness, to appear before the committee.

The committee is tasked with investigating the corruption and money laundering charges against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

In a letter dated Aug. 26, Lacson, through lawyer Jose Balmores, said Mahusay's address was

MIKE/ A14

Opposition wants GMA to quit now

By Jerry Esplanada

LEADERS of the so-called "united opposition" yesterday said regime change was the solution to all the "disorders" plaguing the nation today.

But the change must take place now, not in the May 2004 elections, they said in a news conference at the Club Filipino in San Juan.

Among those present were Juan Ponce Enrile, Francisco Tatad and Eva Estrada-Kalaw, all ex-senators; Jinggoy Estrada and JV Ejercito, sons of ousted President Joseph Estrada and past and present mayor of San Juan, respectively; Sen. Tessie Aquino-

OPPOSITION/ A15

OPPOSITION leaders give the thumbs down to President Macapagal in a press conference at Club Filipino in San Juan. They are from left (seated), Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, former Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Francisco Tatad, Eva Estrada-Kalaw; and (standing) Rep. Simeon Garcia, San Juan Mayor J.V. Ejercito, Horacio "Boy" Morales, Rep. Didagen Dilangalen and lawyer Rufus Rodriguez. JOAN BONDOC

I told you so, Nene tells Ping on Mahusay

By Michael Lim Ubac, Christine Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

I TOLD you so.

So said Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. as he lamented the plight of fellow opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who suddenly found himself in a precarious situation following the "rescue" of Eugenio Mahusay Jr.

Pimentel believed that the apparent defection of Mahusay, who is supposed to be Lacson's key witness to the corruption allegations against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, dealt a fatal blow to Lacson's case against the President's husband.

"He is left holding an empty bag," Pimentel said.

He said "truth by itself is true even if there is no evidence."

But in a court of law or in a Senate investigation, "you need evidence to establish the truth. So truth and evidence are two different things," Pimentel said.

Pimentel earlier disclosed that he had been approached by the same people who convinced Lacson to deliver his privileged

I TOLD YOU/ A14

Tough talk by GMA halts peso slide

THE PESO briefly rose almost one percent against the US dollar on Wednesday, reversing some of its recent strong losses, after President Macapagal-Arroyo warned of a crackdown on speculators.

The peso finished at 55.33 to the greenback on the Philippine Dealing System, up from its Tuesday's closing at 55.45.

Ms Macapagal's warning came a day after the peso hit a 31-month low of 55.60 to the dollar, a breath away from its all-time low of 55.75 during the January 2001 political turmoil that led to the ouster of then President Joseph Estrada.

"I have asked the BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) to crack the whip on speculators and to use feasible monetary tools to stabilize the currency exchange market," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

"The government has the means to even the tide and alleviate the effects of the peso slide on the overall state of the economy," she added.

Dealers said the peso bounced to 55 per dollar on Ms Macapagal's tough stance. "The President's statement serves as a warning to corporate speculators," a commercial bank dealer said.

Dealers also said the peso strengthened on rumors the BSP bank had called on some banks to check their positions and foreign exchange requirements.

Speculation is rife that the limit of reserves commercial banks must maintain with the BSP would be raised when the Monetary Board, the policymaking body of the central bank, meets today.

Analysts said that would be the quickest way to suck liquidity out of the system.

"Given the relatively small size of the Philippine currency market any action by the central bank or even the fear of it could easily persuade players to unwind their positions," said Sameer Goel, Bank of America's strategist in Singapore.

TOUGH/ A6

GMA silent on Mike's reported affair—Bunye

By Juliet Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is so absorbed with affairs of the state that she has no time to react to allegations about the extramarital affair of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo with his personal secretary and accountant, Vicky Toh.

That was the reply of presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye when asked how the President felt about the disclosure made by Eugenio "Udong" Mahusay Jr. in an affidavit secured by Sen. Panfilo Lacson. The affidavit was issued before Mahusay returned to the fold of Arroyo, his wedding godfather and former employer, the other day.

"The President, as you very well know, has already said that the First Gentleman will answer the issues against him," Bunye said during a press briefing.

Mahusay had said there were times when he would serve wine to Arroyo and Toh at 10 p.m. in Arroyo's office in the LTA Building especially when the President was on an out-of-town trip. He said he also bought flowers for

GMA/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/28/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

GMA still our best bet—FVR

INCUMBENT President Macapagal-Arroyo would be the best choice to serve as the next president of the Philippines despite her vow not to stand in elections next year, former President Fidel Ramos said yesterday.

Ramos said his 55-year-old ally Ms Macapagal, elected vice president in 1998, was the most qualified after having spent years in government before rising to the presidency 31 months ago after a military-backed uprising toppled elected President Joseph Estrada.

"I still see her as the best bet for the country in the next round," Ramos told reporters.

"I'm talking about reality. She is the one who can swing it around, nobody else."

By law, presidents serve only six years and cannot be reelected but since Ms Macapagal was not elected, she is eligible to run next year.

She declared in December she would not contest the May 10, 2004 presidential vote so she could turn away from political wranglings and focus on economic development.

Ramos said he hoped Ms Macapagal or the Lakas party would announce soon whether she would run for president, remarking that "even I am getting impatient. Our time is running out." *AFP*

Militants hit deportation of Pinoys from US

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

MILITANT migrant rights advocates yesterday picketed the United States embassy in Manila to protest the alleged racist tint of the US campaign against terror as manifested by the scheduled deportation of 60 Filipinos before the weekend.

"Throwing out 60 Filipinos is not going to clean up America of any terrorism. This is blatant scapegoating," cried Poe Gratela, secretary general of the Migrante International.

The 60 Filipinos are the fifth batch of deportees from the US since June 2002. A total of 271 Filipinos have been previously deported as the US cracked down on undocumented aliens and absconders in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

"The bottom line is that they are not violent criminals. We can't even confirm if these deportees had access to lawyers or were brought to trial," Gratela said.

The deportees are expected to arrive before Friday at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Pampanga.

Foreign Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin said the US has become "paranoid" after the 9/11 terrorist attacks that it has intensified its crackdown on undocumented foreigners and imposed stricter visa rules.

"I do not advise people to go to America if their intention is to go TNT (hide and seek with authorities)," said Ebdalin.

TNT stands for "tago ng tago," a practice by Filipinos who go to the US on non-immigrant visas and then stay for good on the run, avoiding deportation by living with relatives and doing odd jobs that do not require social security registration.

But Ebdalin brushed aside claims by Migrante that the campaign was targeting Filipinos, saying the bulk of deportees were from Latin American countries who just cross the border from the US.

"There's also a big number of deportees who came from Muslim countries," Ebdalin said.

MONEY MATTERS

President Macapagal-Arroyo and two of her Cabinet members—Isidro Camacho of finance and Manuel "Mar" Roxas of trade and industry—exchange pleasantries with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura during a meeting in Malacañang. The President met with the country's economic managers to discus ways to check the slide of the peso against the dollar.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

FACT-FINDING REPORT

No proof of Al-Ghozi collusion with jailers

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A SPECIAL presidential fact-finding yesterday recommended that seven police intelligence officers be criminally charged for the escape of Indonesian bomb-maker Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi and two other suspects from a maximum security jail in Camp Crame last month.

But the commission, chaired by former justice secretary Sedfrey Ordoñez, found no convincing proof that Al-Ghozi had colluded with his jailers and concluded that the July 14 escape was enabled by security incompetence and a construction defect.

It also absolved Philippine National Police chief Gen. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. of any liability in the jailbreak that embarrassed the government and placed in doubt the country's ability to fight terrorism.

It said that contrary to statements made by police officials earlier, no money changed hands in the escape of Al-Ghozi and Abu Sayyaf suspects Abdulmukim Edris and Omar Opik Lasal.

The three-member commission submitted a 55-page report to the President on Tuesday that called for the prosecution of police superintendents Guillermo Danipog, Carlito Natanauan and Reuben Galban; Insp. James Dime and senior officers Ruperto Principe, Buenegardon Campo and Ronald Palmares, the "sleeping guard" who protested his being blamed for the escape.

The officers have been suspended and charged with negligence.

The commission also recommended the criminal prosecution of detainees Cusain Ramos alias Abu Ali, Mark Gumbahale alias Abu Tagalog and Amory Ilagan for aiding and abetting the escape.

The commission also proposed that Congress increase the penalty for police negligence and that a holding facility for high-risk criminals be built.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President concurred with the commission's findings.

Ebdane's exenoration

Asked if Ebdane's exoneration meant he would keep his post, Bunye said the President had not made any indication to the contrary but that it "remains to be seen."

Ebdane offered to resign after the escape but the President did not accept as she wanted Ebdane to personally lead the hunt for Al-Ghozi.

The commission, whose two members are Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong and businessman Miguel Varela, conducted interviews with 29 witnesses during the month-long investigation.

Ordoñez said that after visiting the detention facility and interviewing witnesses, the probe established that "structural defects on the bolt handles of the cells" enabled the escape of Al-Ghozi and two of his cell mates.

"From all indications, it is the commission's conclusion that there was no conspiracy/collusion between any of the officers and men of the intelligence group and the escapees," Ordoñez said at a Palace briefing yesterday.

"It was a clear case of negligence and laxity on the part of some of the custodial personnel that facilitated the escape," he said.

Police officials have admitted that one of the guards was sleeping and another was out shopping during the escape.

Edris, who was recaptured and then shot dead by police in Mindanao earlier this month, allegedly after a fresh escape attempt, had claimed under interrogation that "no money changed hands and that there was no prior collusion," the report said.

Unnamed police officials had said that Al-Ghozi was deliberately set free in exchange for an undetermined amount of cash.

Ordoñez said he personally found the actions of Ebdane "commendable" even though the commission found highly irregular the delay in reporting the escape to the President.

Al-Ghozi, who was arrested last year and sentenced to 17 years in jail for amassing a 1.2-ton cache of explosives, escaped between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. of July 14 but the President was told about it only after lunch.

The delay gave Al-Ghozi and his cell mates enough lead time to escape to Mindanao by land, from Manila to Legazpi, Matnog in Sorsogon and Cagayan de Oro City, Ordoñez said.

He said the President was particularly concerned about the delay in transmitting the information to her. But he noted that the information had also been relayed late to Ebdane and Interior Secretary Jose Lina.

Police officials

Police officials have admitted that they withheld the information because the President was receiving in Malacañang Australian Prime Minister John Howard at the time.

The commission said there were other lapses in the custodial handling of prisoners.

It said there was a deliberate effort on the part of some officers and men of the PNP-IG to cover up the circumstances of the escape after Ebdane considered them all suspects.

Al-Ghozi was being detained in Holding Facility No. 2 from which Abu Sayyaf leader Hector Janjalani had escaped by destroying the ceiling some months ago.

The commission noted that authorities made repairs on the facility after Janjalani's escape but it said that "apart from just making repairs on the ceiling, they should have checked the entire detention facility."

ELECTION 'TECHIES'

Commission on Elections Banjamin Abalos (center) shows Sen. Edgardo Angara and Rep. Jesli Lapus of the joint congressional oversight committee on electoral modernization how technology can help ensure free and honest elections.

JESS YUSON

Loyal soldiers given 'rewards'

PRAISES and commendations and free transport from a grateful public.

These are some of the perks coming to the loyal soldiers who, unlike the rebellious mutineers, did not desert their posts, did not put red patches on their uniforms and did not join the July 27 failed coup.

Two shipping companies—Sulpicio Lines and Super Ferry—are offering a 50 percent discount on fares for officers and enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces when they go on R & R (rest and recreation).

"This is the private sector's way of showing gratitude to the soldiers who stood by the Constitution," said Rear Adm. Mateo Mayuga, deputy chief of staff for personnel, during a "pep talk" with officers and enlisted personnel of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division in Tanay, Rizal yesterday.

Before the dialogue, AFP chief Gen. Narciso Abaya had awarded Bronze Medals to 10 officers and men of the Army's 59th Infantry Battalion based in Sulu for their role in quelling the rebellion in which some 356 officers and enlisted personnel participated.

"When I was directing operations during the mutiny, I asked for the 59th IB," Abaya said in his speech.

If there was one unit that was capable of taking back from the mutinous soldiers the Oakwood Premier Hotel at Ayala Center, it would be the 59th IB, he said. *TJ Burgonio*

Court asked to uphold ban on religious endorsement

THE SOCIAL Justice Society, a small political party composed of lawyers, yesterday asked the Court of Appeals to uphold a Manila regional trial court's decision declaring unconstitutional the endorsement of candidates by religious leaders during elections.

"The right to religious profession and worship has a two-fold aspect—freedom to believe and freedom to act on one's belief. The first is absolute as long as the belief is confined within the realm of thought. The second is subject to regulation where the belief is translated into external facts that affect the public welfare," said SJS head Samson Alcantara in an eight-page comment before the CA.

The endorsement candidates by religious leaders, the SJS argues, is a violation of the principle of the separation of Church and State. *P Tubeza*

Customs men claim tactical victory, end protests

By Martin P. Marfil

EMPLOYEES of the Bureau of Customs, claiming "tactical victory" over the way government's anti-corruption drive is being carried out, yesterday decided to stop their daily protests against the on-going lifestyle checks on public officials and employees.

"We have declared a ceasefire," Romy Pagulayan, president of the Bureau of Customs Employees Association, said. "We have achieved tactical victory as the basic objective (of the lifestyle checks) would be subject to review."

Malacañang, he said, plans to draft an executive order to institutionalize the lifestyle checks through the creation of a new body.

Customs officials and employees have strongly protested the way the lifestyle checks were being conducted by the government.

Pagulayan said that the guidelines, procedures and structures that will govern the new body would be reviewed by the Bocea.

"From there, we will see," he replied when asked if they would continue the protest actions if the new directive runs counters to the interests of Bocea employees.

According to Pagulayan, the Bocea has started to link up with other government agencies amid reports that the administration plans to implement a mass lay-off.

"We're establishing an alliance with other government agencies under the Department of Finance. We're talking with those from the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Philippine Deposit and Insurance Corp. and the National Tax Research Center," he said.

Mahusay saga part of script —Bayan

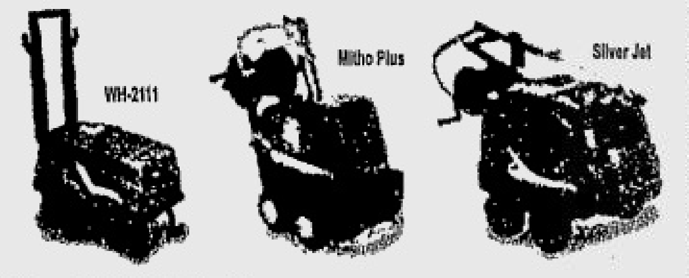
AT the end of the "Udong" Mahusay drama is a "negotiated settlement" between the Macapagal administration and opposition Senator Panfilo Lacson, a militant group yesterday warned.

Lambasting both the Lacson and Macapagal camps for "taking the public for fools," the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan said it "would not be surprised if in the end, Mahusay retracts his testimony. Lacson does not file a case in court (against the First Gentleman) and the money laundering, illegal drug and murder charges against Lacson are dropped."

The Bayan Secretary General Teodoro Casiño also said both camps "probably think the public are so gullible as to believe the fantastic tales about Mahusay's 'protective custody' and his 'rescue' by his ninong, housing secretary Michael Defensor."

While Lacson has been doing a "striptease act, deliberately holding back his evidence and using his (parliamentary) immunity to extract media mileage," he noted, the Arroyo camp has resorted to "fake rescue operations in a desperate bid to hide the truth."

"All the events are pointing to a negotiated settlement among the actors of this scandal," he added.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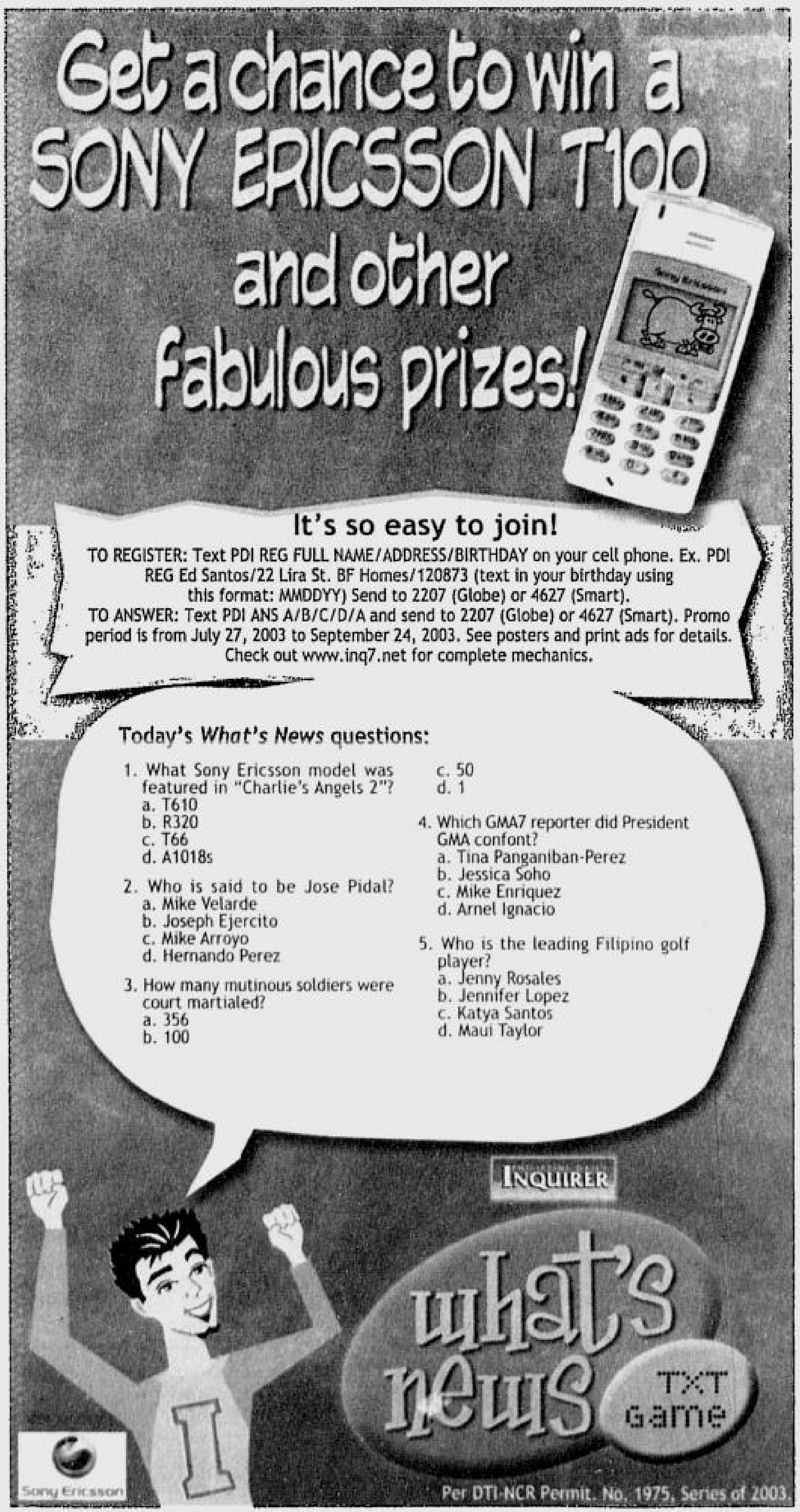
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1. What Sony Ericsson model was featured in "Charlie's Angels 2"?
   a. T610
   b. R320
   c. T66
   d. A1018s
2. Who is said to be Jose Pidal?
   a. Mike Velarde
   b. Joseph Ejercito
   c. Mike Arroyo
   d. Hernando Perez
3. How many mutinous soldiers were court martialed?
   a. 356
   b. 100
   c. 50
   d. 1
4. Which GMA7 reporter did President GMA confont?
   a. Tina Panganiban-Perez
   b. Jessica Soho
   c. Mike Enriquez
   d. Arnel Ignacio
5. Who is the leading Filipino golf player?
   a. Jenny Rosales
   b. Jennifer Lopez
   c. Katya Santos
   d. Maui Taylor

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815-3123	631-3007 • 631-3045	410-3709 • 410-3710		850-4577	243-9895	920-8064		

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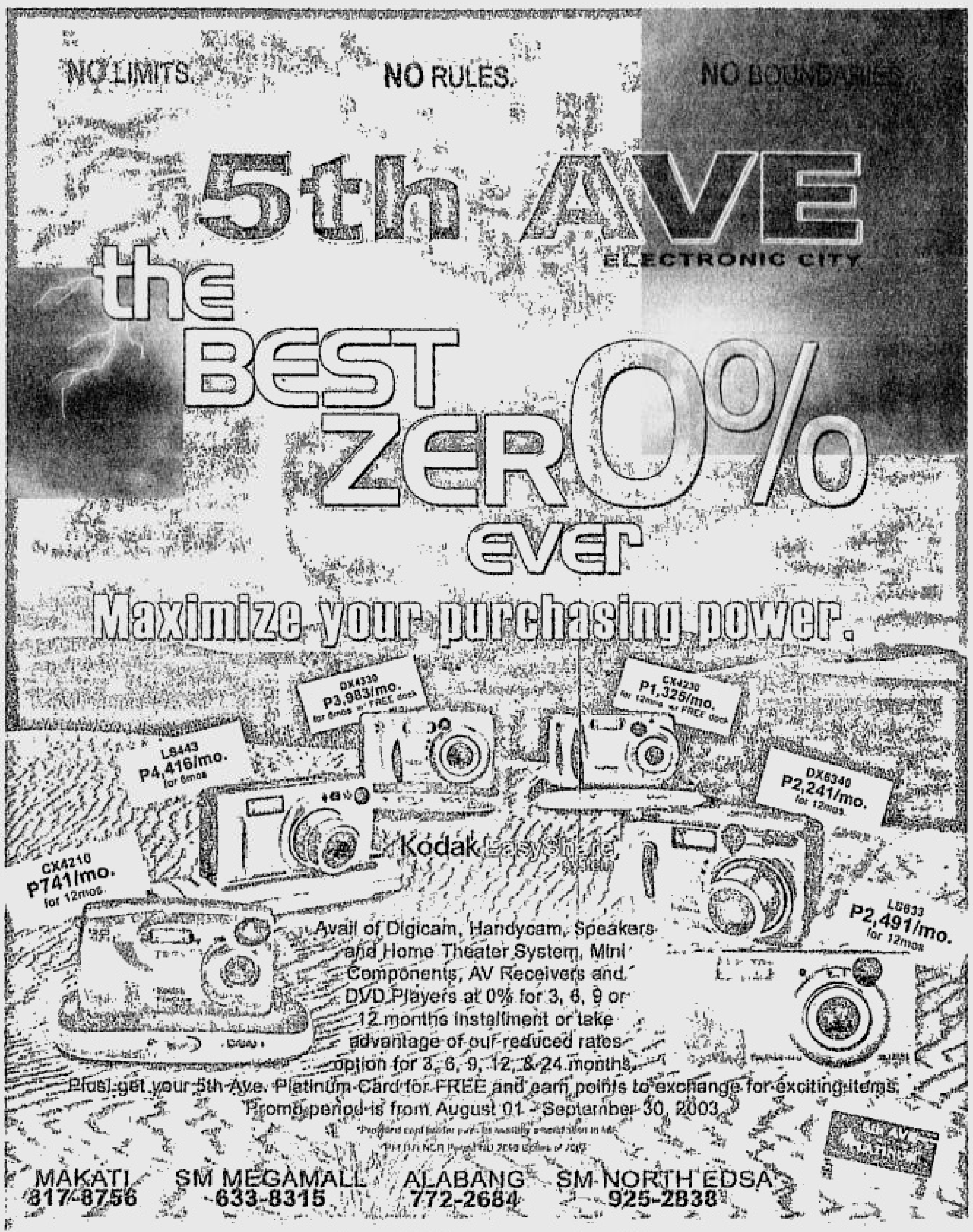
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MAGSAYSAY AWARDEES

Awardees James Michael Lyngdoh (right) and Shantha Sinha both of India arrive at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to receive the Magsaysay Awards on Sunday. Lyngdoh won the award for government service and Sinha for community leadership. The Magsaysay Awards Lecture Series starts today. ROGER MARGALLO

Tables are turned on lifestyle prober

By Armand Nocum

IT's a case of the accuser being the accused himself.

A ranking police official investigating the lifestyles of public officials and employees is himself being investigated for allegedly extorting money from his subjects.

A top official of the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday confirmed that a lifestyle check is being conducted on an official of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) accused of asking P5 million from two Bureau of Customs officials whose lifestyles the CIDG agent investigated.

"Some people have been calling us, saying they have had a bad experience with that person," the Ombudsman official said of the CIDG official with the rank of colonel.

Jaime Maglipon, a deputy Customs collector who flunked the lifestyle check, earlier accused a CIDG agent of trying to extort P5 million from him. CIDG probers also asked for the same amount from Flor Aguilar, chief of the Customs miscellaneous division, who likewise failed in the lifestyle test.

The Ombudsman official, who asked not to be named, said "there might be truth" to reports that some CIDG agents have been asking P5 million from officials of the BOC and the Department of Public Works and Highways in exchange for passing marks in the ongoing lifestyle check.

The CIDG is one of the agencies conducting the lifestyle check on government officials and employees. But the overall coordinating agency of the anti-graft campaign is Malacañang's Transparency Group.

Other agencies involved are the Ombudsman, the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, the Department of Justice and the National Bureau of Investigation.

"It's true because we have had a sad experience with that official. In the past, he had also asked money from us," the Ombudsman quoted the informant, an importer, as saying.

He said the informant refused to give money to the CIDG agent, arguing that their importation had the necessary papers and their business above board.

The extortion incident happened about three to four years ago. He said they have asked the informant to put his complaint in writing.

"They cannot even figure out why (the CIDG official) was looking into their importation papers," the Ombudsman official said, noting that such task is the responsibility of customs personnel.

"We are going to monitor this issue," he said.

He admitted that even in their office, they find it hard to recruit good men.

"There's always the danger of getting infiltrated by persons of bad character," he said.

CA suspends BSP Gov. Buenaventura

Statement by
Teodoro C. Borlongan
former president, Urban Bank

Justice is blind... but should we?

Without contrary evidence and facts made public, whatever BSP says is taken at face as the "gospel truth".

Lately in interviews and news articles, responses of BSP officials to the recent Court of Appeals' decision to suspend them have been — "we offered them an emergency loan but they turned it down," "there was really no bank-run," "the bank had purchased a lot of garbage loans from their investment arm at a premium," and "we have been monitoring them since 1999 due to capital deficiency."

Their responses are false, misleading and more importantly, are not the issue of the CA Decision. Rather, it is about their acts that were "capricious, discriminatory, whimsical, arbitrary, unjust or tantamount to a denial of due process and equal protection clauses of the Constitution." Hence, the CA found the BSP Governor and four other senior officials guilty of Gross Neglect of Duty.

What the CA found "more startling was the nagging question of why it was abruptly closed for business." The motive and answer have yet to be truthfully given by Buenaventura.

The case is far more complex than anyone can imagine. No amount of lip service from business groups can ever absolve the guilty parties since it is only the courts that have all the hard evidence before them. In other words, opinions not founded on hard facts cannot be taken seriously.

Some business groups have said that the CA decision will undermine the authority of the Bangko Sentral and will prevent its officials from performing their tasks. On the contrary, this should further strengthen BSP's resolve while observing decency, honesty and fair play — simply because of the public accountability that is required of individuals in office.

Let the facts of the case speak for themselves

On 25 April 2000 evening, Urban Bank Inc. (UBI) declared a bank holiday that was pre-cleared with BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura, to put a *temporary halt* on the panic withdrawals that reached extraordinary magnitude of P1-2 billion during that day.

UBI and Urbancorp Investments Inc. (UII), which shared the same clientele, suffered a run at the time of a jittery financial market, because of numerous negative (false) news reports on UBI, *attributed to BSP sources.*

In the five weeks of constant withdrawals until the holiday, UBI and UII made good P3-billion in withdrawals. And even at the time of their closure, UBI still had P2.0-billion left in liquid and non-risk assets, and UII had P355-million. They did not borrow a single centavo from BSP or PDIC.

In less than 24 hours, the Monetary Board (MB) ordered the summary closure of UBI and Urbancorp Development Bank (UDB) and the virtual closure of UII, on the bases of three Supervision and Examination (SES) Reports by BSP dated 26 April 2000.

Under Sec. 30 of RA 7653 New Central Bank Act, the MB may order the closure of a bank upon deliberation of such valid SES report. Because of BSP's awesome powers including the power to close banks, Sec. 16 requires MB members, BSP officers and examiners to exercise "extraordinary diligence" in the performance of their duties.

On 8 Nov. 2000, UBI president Teodoro Borlongan filed a complaint before the Ombudsman against Gov. Buenaventura, Deputy Gov. Alberto Reyes, Dolores Yuvienco, Candon Guerrero, Tomas Aure, Jr. and Juan de Zuniga, Jr.

Docketed as OMB-ADM-0-00-0867 (the administrative case) and OMB-0-00-1651 (the related criminal case), Borlongan charged that the three SES Reports were FALSIFIED by the respondents.

Borlongan alleged that the SES Reports contained *false and fabricated findings* on the financial conditions of the three institutions, in order to justify their unwarranted closure.

Moreover, the Reports were altered and ante-dated to appear that they were submitted to the MB during its Special Meeting at the Manila Golf Club on 26 April 2000 morning.

The Ombudsman's findings

On 2 July 2002, the Ombudsman issued an Order, finding that the SES Reports were *"haphazardly and negligently done"*. It also found that the reports' recommendation of closure were *"harsh"*, *"drastic"*, *"premature"* and *"early"*.

The Ombudsman found Reyes, Yuvienco, Guerrero and Aure administratively liable for Simple Neglect of Duty, and imposed a penalty of one-month-and-one-day suspension. Buenaventura and Zuniga were exonerated.

On 19 August 2002, Borlongan elevated the case to the Court of Appeals (CA). Docketed as CA-GR SP No. 72270, Borlongan sought the review of the Ombudsman's decision in the administrative case.

The evidence

Numerous pieces of evidence were submitted to the Ombudsman and the CA, showing the falsehoods of the reports' findings and the direct complicity of Buenaventura. The evidence sought to prove respondents' negligence, but also their malice, bad faith and premeditated purpose to shut-down UBI, and the fraud and coercion to cover their misfeasance.

Among others, evidence were submitted to show that: (1) BSP caused UBI's panic withdrawals, then denied timely and sufficient financial assistance;

(2) Buenaventura preemptively announced 12 hours before the MB deliberated on UBI's fate, that *"They've only declared the holiday today. Tomorrow, we will be coming in to take over. PDIC will be the receiver"*;

(3) PDIC prematurely served upon UBI the MB closure order, even quoting the MB resolution number, when the MB have not yet met to approve such closure;

(4) A fabricated fax document was allegedly attached to the SES Report, when no such report existed at the time that the MB met.

(5) BSP denied UBI, UDB and UII of their procedural rights to respond to and take corrective action on BSP's (false) findings. The findings in the SES Reports were neither discussed nor furnished by BSP, in violation of its own Central Bank Manual of Examination Procedures.

The CA Decision

On 13 August 2003, the CA issued its 19-page Decision, exonerating Zuniga but finding Buenaventura, Reyes, Yuvienco, Guerrero and Aure guilty of GROSS NEGLECT OF DUTY. The CA imposed a penalty of *one-year suspension* without pay.

The Decision was handed down by the CA 5th Division, composed of Associate Justices Eugenio Labitoria (chairman and ponente), Elvi John S. Asuncion, and Lucas P. Bersamin.

The CA decision follows closely the Supreme Court's decision in the Banco Filipino case, a landmark in Philippine banking jurisprudence. But as found by the CA, the closure of UBI, UDB and UII was even much WORSE than that of Banco Filipino. Its case has gone beyond the Supreme Court's ruling on due process and fair play.

The CA's findings

In said Decision, the CA found:

"Admittedly, the closure of UBI and its subsidiary financial institutions came as a bolt out of the blue, to the public. What was more startling was the nagging question of why it was abruptly closed for business." (p.10)

"from the foregoing pronouncements of the Ombudsman, it is safe to say that respondents indeed made perfunctory review and investigation of UBI, UDB and UII's financial status and precipitately concluded that said banks were experiencing insolvency or liquidity problems." (p.11)

"This Court cannot help but notice why private respondent Buenaventura was absolved from any liability when he is the governor of BSP, the Chief Executive of the Bangko Sentral... He cannot take refuge behind the inefficiency of his subordinates... Had the respondents, headed by Governor Buenaventura, adhered to the pronouncements enunciated in the case of Banco Filipino Savings and Mortgage Bank vs. Monetary Board, Central Bank of the Philippines, et al., they would not have hastily closed these banking institutions." (p.13)

"It is evident from the records of this case that, when respondent Buenaventura acquiesced to the recommendation of his Deputy [Governor Reyes] in closing UBI, UDB and UII, who based the closure on the SES Reports which were haphazardly prepared as found no less by the Ombudsman-then, respondent Buenaventura is grossly incompetent and negligent in the observation and discharge of his duties/responsibilities spelled out in the New Central Bank Act. He did not comply in the exercise of his duties and responsibilities as mandated by Section 16 of R.A. 7653." (p.17)

"The closure of UBI, UDB and UII was done in an *arbitrary manner* violative of fair play and committed with *grave abuse* of discretion which was *worst than* what happened when the Central Bank closed Banco Filipino." (p.16)

The CA Decision only determined the administrative liability of BSP respondents. Borlongan will yet file for certiorari before the Supreme Court assailing the Ombudsman's decision in the related criminal case. In his 8 Nov. 2000 complaint, Borlongan had charged respondents for *falsification* punishable under the Revised Penal Code, and violation of the Anti-Graft & Corrupt Practices Act.

UBI is one of the *largest* banks ordered closed in Philippine banking history. UBI with UDB are also the *only banks* ordered closed for reason only of illiquidity.

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DOJ set to release findings on Burnham's claims soon

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice will soon release its findings on its probe into the allegations of former Abu Sayyaf hostage Gracia Burnham that there was collusion between the military and the bandit group, Justice Undersecretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez said yesterday.

But Gutierrez declined to reveal the DOJ findings, saying that they have yet to reach a "conclusion."

The report will be submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo next month, she said.

Ms Macapagal earlier ordered the DOJ to conduct an investigation into Burnham's claim in her book "In the Presence of My Enemies" that the military was colluding with the Abu Sayyaf.

Burnham, and her husband Martin, were among the hostages taken by the bandit group in a daring raid at the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan on May 27, 2001.

The DOJ is now wrapping up its investigation after interviewing seven former Abu Sayyaf hostages.

Gutierrez also interviewed Burnham for three hours in Rosehill, Kansas, last May in the presence of her American lawyers about the allegations contained in her book.

"All of them provided useful details while some gave information relevant to the issue (of collusion)," she said.

Gutierrez said that based on the report, criminal charges could be filed against certain military officials.

But she declined to identify the military officers involved.

"The purpose of the investigation was to determine whether there was collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and the military in ransom payments. We will have something to say about that," Gutierrez said.

She said the report would also include its findings on allegations that the military supplied food and ammunitions to the Abu Sayyaf and on the missing $300,000 ransom money that was allegedly paid to the bandit group in exchange for the release of the Burnhams.

She said the DOJ report could also clarify allegations by rebel soldiers in the failed July 27 mutiny that the military high command was in cahoots with different rebel groups in the country.

"There were questions about that matter. Our report will be able to clarify some of that. We will say something about it," she said.

Gracia was rescued by the military on June 7, 2002 in Zamboanga del Norte but her husband was killed during the rescue operation.

Private groups in the US earlier raised $300,000 to pay the ransom of the Burnham couple but later claimed that the Abu Sayyaf double-crossed them when the bandit group failed to release the couple after the ransom was paid.

The government, however, claims that the money was part of a "sting operation" to entrap the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

National Bureau of Investigation-Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz said in his affidavit to the Anti-Money Laundering Council that the NBI conducted the sting operation on March 13, 2002.

The NBI delivered $300,000 to a "courier" on March 13, 2002 "but subsequent efforts to arrest/capture the holder of the sting funds and recover the same failed," said the AMLC.

The AMLC was provided with a 41-page document listing the serial numbers of these dollar notes and, on Aug. 27, 2002, the council ordered the freezing of all dollar accounts that contained these bills.

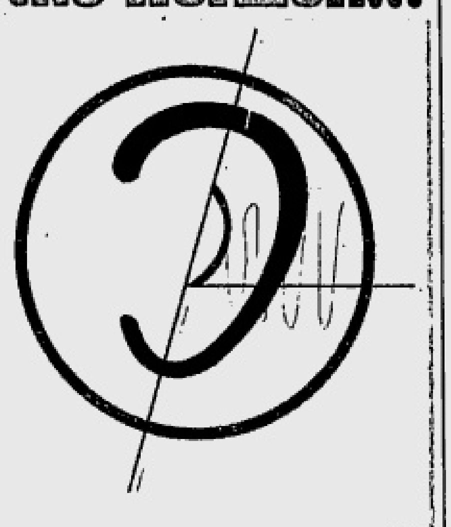
Five banks later reported that they had such bills in their possession and had already frozen the accounts.

The depositors were then told to explain "under oath" how they got hold of the dollar notes.

On April 10, the AMLC authorized an inquiry into the bank accounts.

On April 15, the CA extended the freeze order up to July 21, 2003.

After the investigation by the AMLC Legal and Evaluation and its Compliance and Investigation units, the council decided to lift the freeze order on the deposits. The government said it did not have evidence to link the depositors to the Abu Sayyaf.



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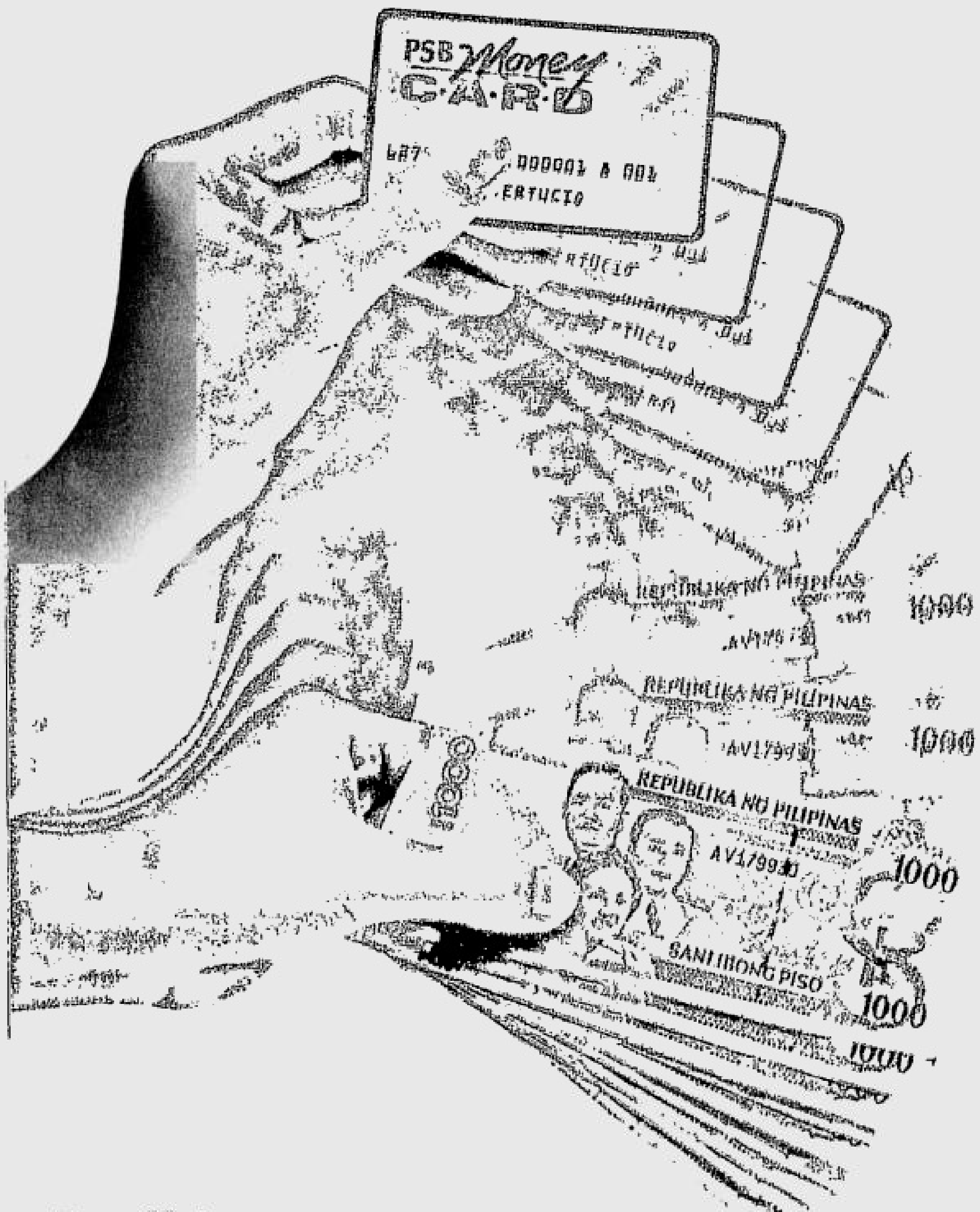

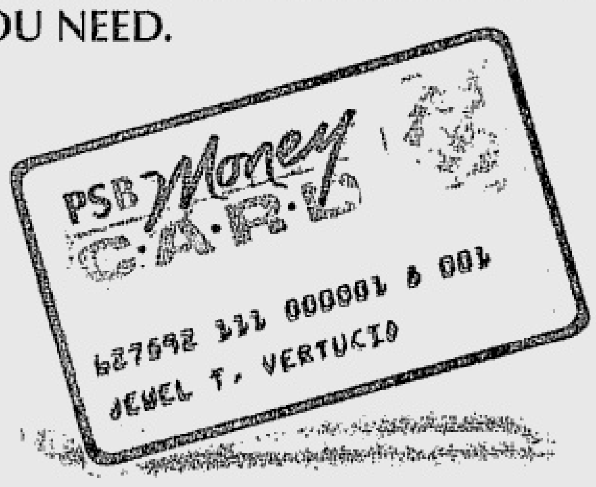

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Tough talk by GMA halts peso slide

From page A1

"But I think raising reserve requirement would be an effective way to adjust liquidity in the market," he said.

Goel, however, doubted if any measure could sustain the peso's strength. "It could rise above the 55 level but will soon start creeping back."

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the central bank did not intervene on Wednesday to stem the fall of the peso. "From time to time, we provided liquidity but clearly not today," Buenaventura told reporters.

Dealers in Manila said the peso, down about 6 percent since May, would continue to suffer a seasonal rise in imports and low remittances from workers abroad.

Unfortunate brew

Ms Macapagal, however, attributed the peso's weakness to "the unfortunate brew of destabilization and partisan politics." Sentiment for Philippine assets has soured after the failed Makati mutiny by 300 renegade soldiers on July 27.

"But we are consolidating rapidly and we hope that the distraction of partisanship and controversies will die down soon," Ms Macapagal said.

Speaking before Manila-based foreign correspondents, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the failed mutiny had slowed the country's economic growth and punished the local currency. But he added that prospects for the second half of the year were bright.

"We just seem to always shoot ourselves in the foot when things are beginning to look better," Camacho told the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, detailing what he said was a "sense of frustration" among the business sector.

He lamented the "everyday obsession of a Filipino—one looking for entertainment on the front pages of newspapers."

"The Philippines really has a much better potential than what is reflected. It's said that we do it to ourselves," Camacho said.

The peso went into a tailspin over the past month amid a confluence of adverse political developments, including charges of money laundering against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and a Court of Appeals order suspending Buenaventura and other BSP officials for a year. The officials are contesting the ruling.

Camacho said "there was momentum picking up" after the gross domestic product (GDP) rose by a stronger than anticipated 4.5 percent in the three months to March.

Loss of momentum

"If anything it (the mutiny's fallout) would be loss of momentum as far as the economy is concerned," he said.

Camacho said this deadweight would be felt most acutely in investments, with government spending having only limited impact because of self-imposed austerity measures over the past two and a half years to rein in the national budget deficit.

The government is scheduled to release GDP figures for the three months to June on Thursday.

Camacho said it was already a given that the numbers would be weaker compared with the first quarter due to the fallout from the SARS epidemic, the Iraq war, El Niño drought and a general slowdown in Asian economies that have become "a more important market for the Philippines."

But Camacho said GDP growth should resume its momentum in the second half. Japan's expected economic recovery should give "a strong push," he said, adding that exporters were seeing increased orders for the second half.

Camacho also said the "peso is undervalued today" because of the political premium, adding that the situation would put pressure on Manila's foreign debt servicing requirements.

"The sensitivity estimates for this year would show that there's about P1.5 billion in terms of additional debt servicing and maybe interest payments for every peso decline," he said.

The government hopes to make up the added burden with increased import duties, he added.

Camacho said he did not discount "the possibility of adjusting the borrowing program" of the government after the central bank raised concern over the government's decision to rely on external sources for only 30 percent of financial requirements for next year.

He said the central bank was concerned the government could be forced to tap the local foreign exchange market to service debt, putting further pressure on the peso. *Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., AP, AFP and Reuters*

GMA silent on Mike's reported affair—Bunye

From page A1

Toh every Valentine's Day.

Asked how the President felt upon seeing pictures of Toh in the presidential yacht, BRP Ang Pangulo, Bunye said: "She has not reacted one way or the other."

Bunye was also asked if the President's statement last week that she was married to the country meant she had divorced the First Gentleman.

"No comment," he initially said.

When reporters pressed him for an explanation, he said: "What the President wants to say is she's placing the interest of the country above family and it's the way it should be. That we should place the interest of the country above anything else."

Should the President banish her husband to their private residence in La Vista in Quezon City?

Bunye replied: "I'm not sure that's called for."

But a friend of Arroyo's told a group of reporters on Friday that the President had in fact asked the First Gentleman to stay out of Malacañang. The friend, who asked not to be named, said he just had a phone conversation with Arroyo that day and was told that he (Arroyo) was staying in the La Vista house.

The friend also said that the First Couple's only daughter, Luli, was most devastated about the charges against her father.

"She's very close to Mike, that's why she was very much affected by the controversy," the friend said.

For Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Virtus Gil, Lacson's disclosure to the media of the supposed romantic involvement of Arroyo with Toh was "malicious" and is not something an officer and a gentleman would do.

Gil is Lacson's mistah (classmate) at the Philippine Military Academy.

GMA absorbed with affairs of the state MALACAÑANG PHOTO

He said malice was a matter of perception. To prove this, he recounted his encounters with a female police colonel.

When he was still chief of the PNP Crime Laboratory, Gil said, the female officer would usually barge into his room and gamely tell him, "I love you, sir!"

Gil said he found the gesture sweet and saw no malice in it, and so he often replied, "I love you, too."

"If you put malice in it, it would be a different story," he said. "But if you put none, it would bring you closer to the person."

Gil, who was said to be very close to the First Family, also said he could not believe Lacson's allegation that Arroyo often tasked Mahusay to withdraw and deposit money from the controversial Jose Pidal account.

The account was where Arroyo supposedly kept millions in unspent campaign contributions he had collected when his wife ran for vice president in 1998.

"Would you believe that someone would entrust these things to a janitor?" he asked. "Of course, not." *With a report from Christian Esguerra*

Palace exec told . . .

From page A1

day advised one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's aides to go back and lead a quiet life in the academe.

Presidential Deputy Chief of Staff Renato Velasco told the Feliciano Commission that alleged mastermind Sen. Gregorio Honasan engaged the rebel military officers in a "mainly intellectual discussion" while government forces prepared to assault the Oakwood Premier apartment complex in Makati City.

But upon questioning by members of the fact-finding body, Velasco "corrected" himself. "Senator Honasan was agitating the soldiers by his actions," he said.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Florentino Feliciano, who heads the commission, reacted by telling the witness: "I agree with you, you should have remained an academic."

Velasco, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines, told the body earlier during the hearing that he preferred the academe because he wanted a "quiet life."

On July 27, Honasan, along with Senators Rodolfo Biazon and Tito Sotto, Velasco, housing chief Michael Defensor, and Army Col. Danilo Lim met the Magdalo mutineers inside the Oakwood building at around 5 p.m., the deadline set by the President for the more than 300 rebel soldiers to surrender or face assault. Ms Macapagal later extended the deadline to 7 p.m.

Velasco told the Feliciano Commission that during their encounter, the rebel soldiers were already "agitated and emotional" as they spoke of widespread corruption.

Instead of calming down the soldiers, Honasan, a former Army colonel who had led several coup attempts against then President Corazon Aquino, went into a "very passionate" discourse about the merits of his National Recovery Program, Velasco said.

"The soldiers were practically mesmerized by him," he said, showing the commissioners how Honasan gestured with his fists to stress his point.

Asked if he felt that Honasan was fueling the soldiers' anger, Velasco replied: "I would not say, 'No, Honasan was not agitating them.'"

But Feliciano said that based on the witness' description, Honasan's actions were "akin to agitation."

UP adviser

Commissioner Carolina Hernandez, another UP political science professor, said the senator "should have had more sense not to talk about the NRP at the time because it would agitate the soldiers more."

"I agree with you. How can I disagree with my former adviser?" a smiling Velasco replied, sending the other commissioners into chuckles.

Hernandez, who divulged that she once served as Velasco's dissertation adviser, frowned.

Velasco said he got into the negotiations by accident because Honasan called him an hour before the 5 p.m. deadline. The senator, he said, was offering his help and asking for guarantee that he would not be arrested.

He said Honasan had told him, Defensor, chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao and Presidential Management Staff head Silvestre Afable that he would "talk sense" into the soldiers "to avert bloodshed."

But Honasan did not try to convince the soldiers to stand down during the actual talks, Velasco said.

Feliciano told the witness that he used "extraordinary logic" when he agreed to accompany Honasan to the soldiers.

"I'd like to think he was sincere," Velasco said. But later he said that right from the start, he suspected that the senator was part of the coup. He said he was convinced when he saw that Honasan was immediately met by the rebels' spokesperson Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes when they reached Oakwood.

Biazon and Sotto had waited for hours to get inside, but they were allowed in only when Honasan arrived. "That's what I find very revealing," Velasco said.

At the start, Feliciano told the Malacañang official to stop referring to Honasan as "Brod Greg" since it was "unnerving." Honasan, Velasco and Defensor belong to the Alpha Sigma fraternity.

Velasco said the President was prepared to order the assault had the rebels not agreed to negotiate with her official representative, former Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Roy Cimatu.

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TO RUN OR NOT TO RUN

Reyes still unsure on plans for 2004

REYES

CLARK FIELD, Pampanga—Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes is still undecided on whether to run in the May 2004 national elections.

"I still don't know whether I'm running or not. As I said, all (will be done) in due time and I honestly don't know yet. When the time comes... then I would decide," Reyes told reporters here on Wednesday.

Several months ago, Reyes revealed plans to run for an elective position in 2004, even for the Presidency if President Macapagal-Arroyo opts not run in next year's elections.

In the meantime, he said, he was doing his best to perform the tasks assigned by the President.

Reyes said the President had ordered him to pursue reforms at the Department of National Defense and to have "an enhanced, professional and united Armed Forces of the Philippines."

Reyes was guest speaker here at the graduation ceremony of the 710th Special Operations Wing, the special antiterrorist unit of the Philippine Air Force.

He also took advantage of the occasion to hold a dialogue with PAF men.

Assisted by some military generals and colonels, including Air Force commanding general, Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan, Reyes listened and responded to the grievances aired by personnel of the seven PAF wings stationed here.

"The morale of the soldiers is very important for President Macapagal-Arroyo. But the government is financially incapable to give everything," he said.

But he assured the soldiers that the government has been exerting efforts to improve the lives and working conditions of the soldiers.

Reyes also advised soldiers to express their sentiments and concerns through the chain of command.

He urged generals and colonels to hold weekly consultations with enlisted men to immediately address their problems.

"All things will be solved through proper dialogue and consultation. All you have to do is utilize the chain of command," he said. "Keep (the) channel for dialogue open. Don't keep the problem among yourselves. Say the problem so that we can address it."

During the dialogue, Reyes told the PAF men that the 50 percent salary increase being awaited by soldiers would be given in January next year. Soldiers, thus, would enjoy salaries comparable to those received by teachers and policemen next year, he added.

The Macapagal administration, he said, is also working on an affordable housing project for soldiers, which could be paid in 15 to 25 years.

Reyes said the DND is talking to operators of transport businesses to provide 50 percent fare discounts for soldiers boarding planes, ships and buses.

Other issues raised by PAF men during the dialogue include insufficient health care benefits for them and their families and education for their children. They also asked Reyes and other military officials to stop graft and corruption in the military. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Squatters may lost right to vote

THE COMMISSION on Elections will strictly impose the "bonafide resident's provision in the 2004 elections, a move which could result in the disenfranchisement of about a million Metro Manila squatters.

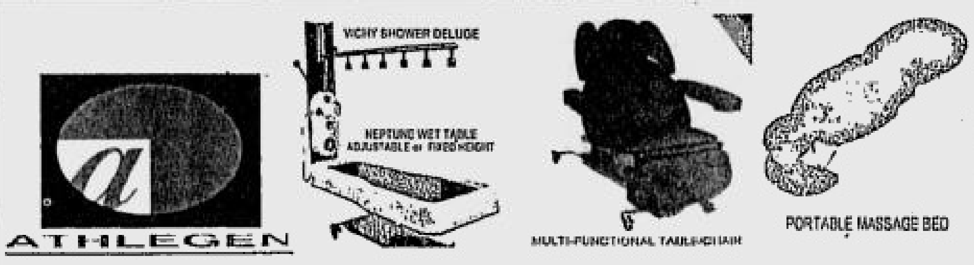
Comelec National Capital Region director Ferdinand Rafanan told reporters that squatters will not be allowed to register while those who were able to register before may be excluded in the voters' list. "This is what the law states and the Comelec is mandated to implement it." Rafanan said.

New applicants are now required to answer if they own their homes, renting or if they have permission from the owner to stay in the property.

For squatters who were able to register in the past, Rafanan said that they could easily be identified through their addresses. *Martin Marfil*

Dentists' meeting

DR. ANTONIO A. Baldemor will preside over the first quarterly meeting of the Philippine section of the International College of Dentists today at the Executive Lounge of Unilab, Inc. in Mandaluyong. The affair, which starts at 5 p.m., includes an exhibit of the works of the master wood carvers and painters of Paete to be opened by Jeffrey D. Campos of Unilab; a business meeting to be presided by Dr. Baldemor, a scientific presentation by Dr. Arthur Magboo and a discussion on "medical emergencies" in dental practice by the PNRC-Caloocan City chapter.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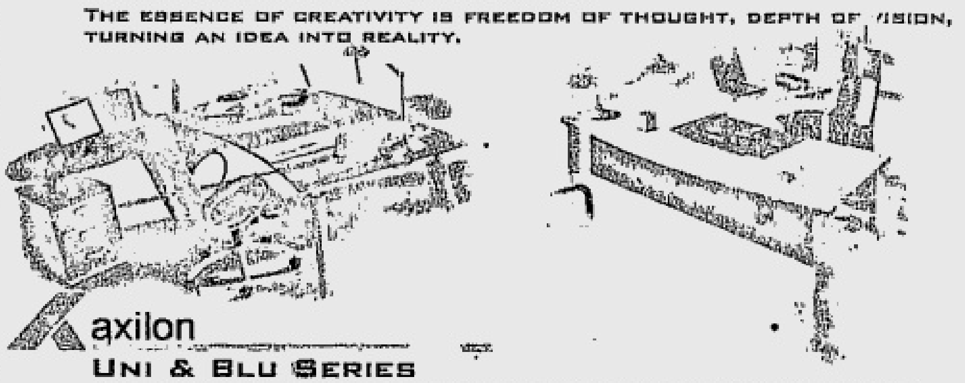

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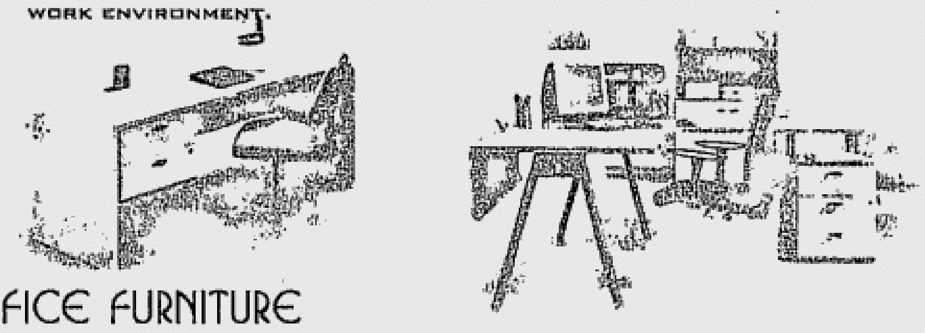

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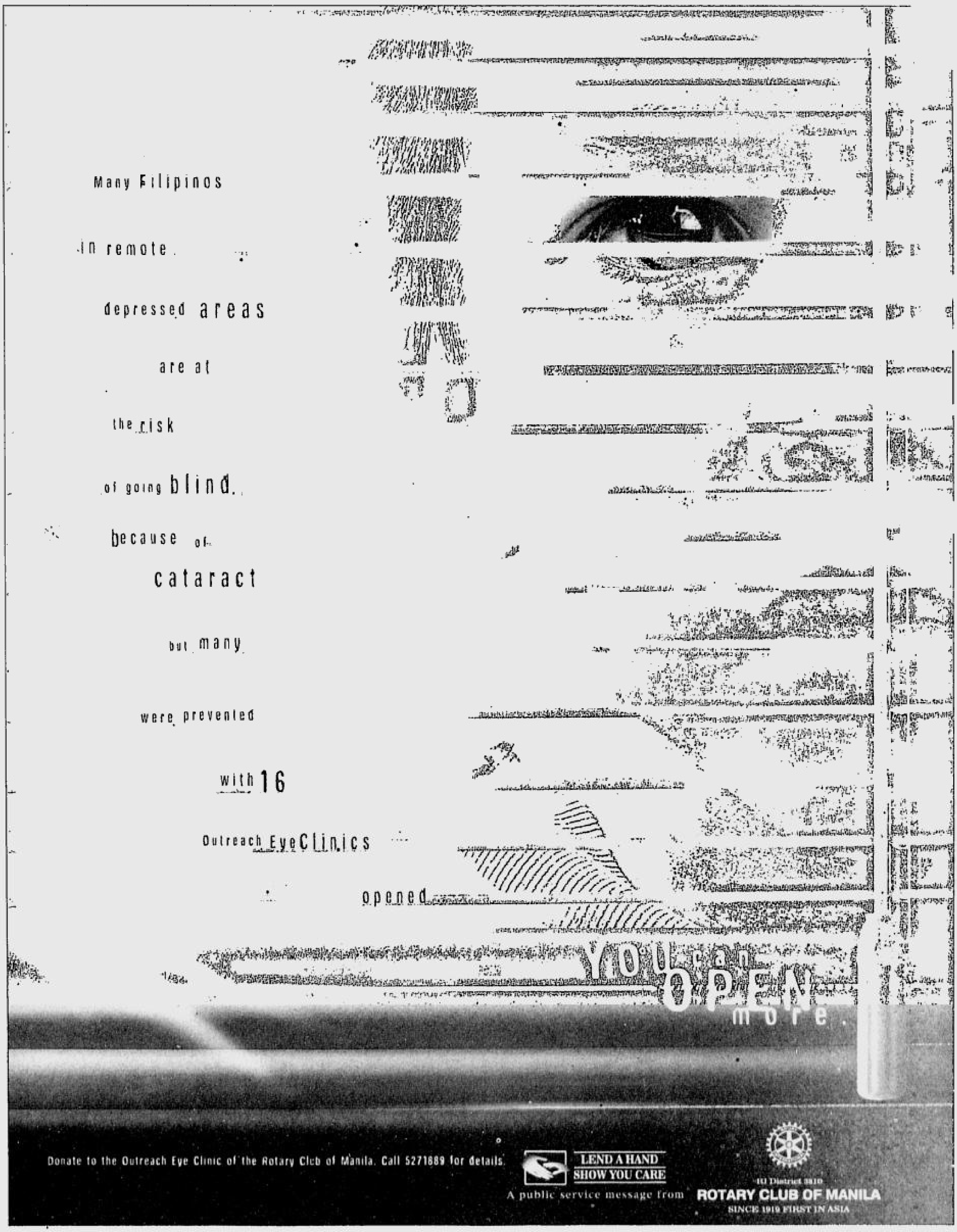
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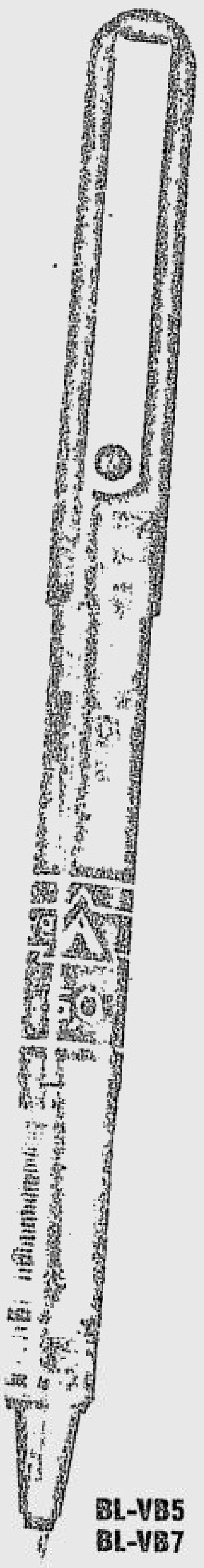

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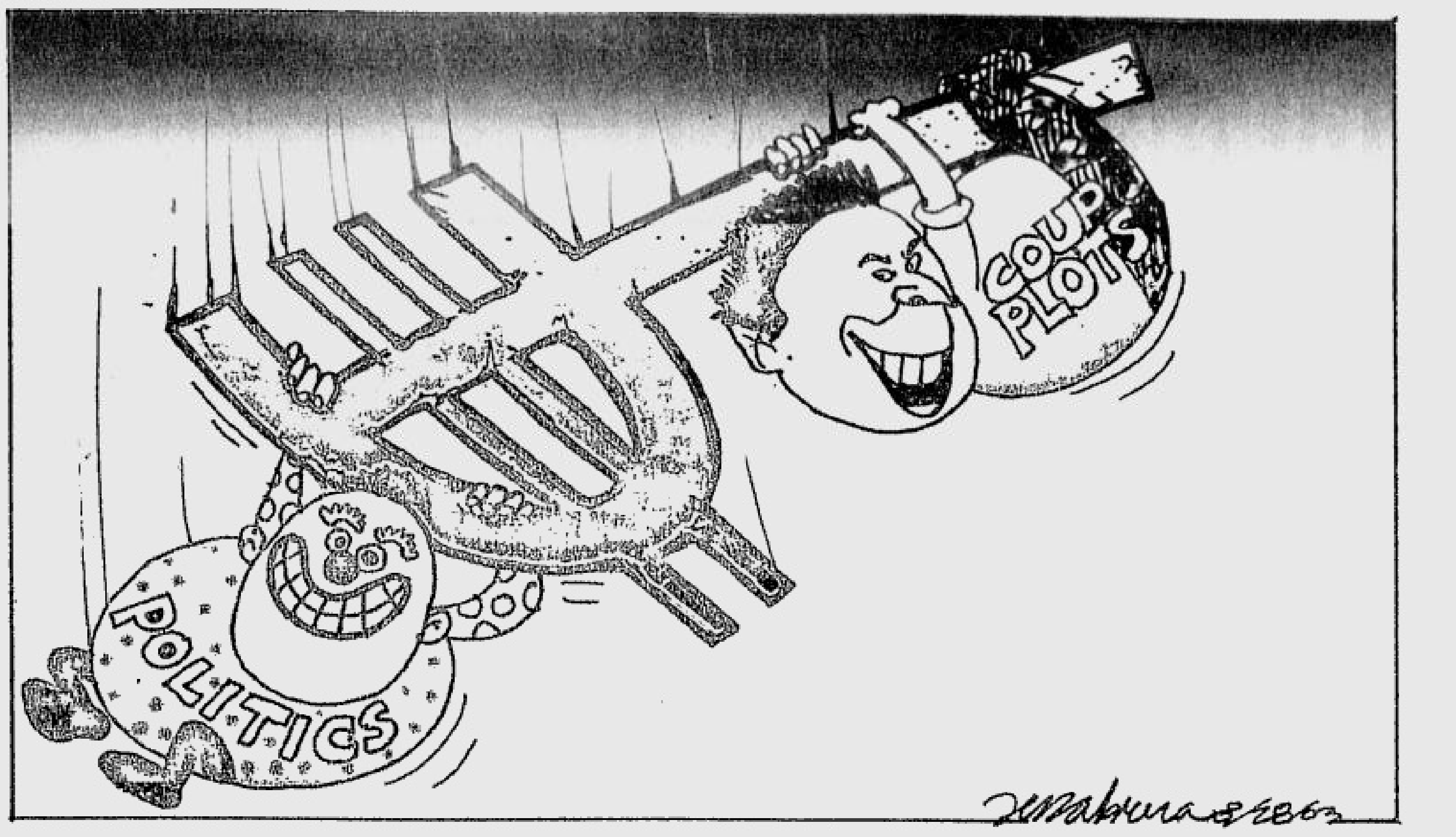


Sinking peso

EDITORIAL

THE PLUNGE of the peso over the past few days, hitting on Tuesday the 31-month low of P55.60 to the US dollar, reflects the political uncertainties arising from a wave of turbulent events that have rocked the nation since the failed July 27 coup.

The weakening of the peso has also rattled the stock market where the Philippine Stock Exchange Index has shed points as the peso lost value. The tremors in the currency and stock markets have fueled pessimistic views that, if the political turmoil remains unabated, the peso slide could become irreversible, even though monetary authorities are considering counter-measures, such as raising interest rates and further intervention in the currency market.

The lowest rate to which the peso sunk in the past 31 months, was P55.75. That happened on Jan. 17, 2001, at the height of the political crisis that ultimately swept President Joseph Estrada out of office.

The circumstances in which Estrada was ousted should haunt the Macapagal administration which has been battered recently by a chain of unsettling events: the failed July 27 coup, the charges of Sen. Panfilo Lacson in the Senate accusing the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, of alleged laundering of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign funds in past elections, and the Court of Appeals decision suspending Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura for one year for gross neglect of duty over the closure of Urban Bank.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has blamed the plunge of the peso on "creeping negativism" in politics, a term that obviously understates the economic impact of political turbulence on confidence in the economy by the markets. Ms Macapagal's assessment is shared by currency traders who said the market was jittery over negative political news that foreshadows continuing political turmoil in the run-up to the 2004 presidential elections.

Unlike the financial meltdown of East Asian markets in the 1997 crisis that depreciated regional currencies, the current peso weakness is mainly due to domestic political volatility, as well as uncertainty over the stability of monetary policy following the court decision to suspend Buenaventura over a case that has little to do with monetary policy and that has more to do with a question of the exercise by the BSP of its supervision and regulatory powers over banks. Whether or not the court decision went out of bounds in intervening in the executive functions of the BSP, the view in the business community is that it has shaken the confidence of businessmen in the stability of economic, if not monetary, policy against idiosyncratic judicial intervention.

It does not help at all that the President has ordered a crackdown on currency trading manipulation. Crackdowns do not address the deeper causes of currency speculation which is a symptom of the political uncertainties generated by the exuberance of Philippine politics.

Very unsettling is the fact that the country hardly had recovered from the coup shock, when the blast in the Senate occurred. Although the First Gentleman was the target, Lacson's attack was obviously intended to damage the Macapagal administration.

The coup and the Lacson attack fitted into the historical pattern that each time the country was shaken by political crisis—as in the coups of the 1980s during the Aquino administration—the government didn't fall but the biggest casualty always has been the economy.

The latest wave of disturbances took place just as the economy, according to independent assessments, was rebounding from a series of economic crises since 1997. When the coup took place, the Asian Development Bank, for example, was already predicting a better than expected economic growth for the coming year. Whether or not Lacson's attacks have damaged the administration will still have to be seen. But what is clear now is that we are clearly paying a heavy economic price for partisan recklessness, military adventurism and the political turmoil they have created.

Money can't buy happiness

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THIS Jose Pidal scandal is turning out to be a real humdinger of a telenovela that will keep viewers and readers glued to their TV sets and newspapers for weeks. *Meron pang* "abduction" and "rescue" of a flaky witness, and a love triangle, with an unfaithful husband cheating on his hardworking wife whenever she was out of town. No scriptwriter can think up of a better plot.

The "rescue" or "abduction" of Eugenio Mahusay by his two brothers, one of whom is a policeman, with the help of Housing Secretary Mike (another Mike) Defensor, was a major government operation despite government denials. No less than three government helicopters gave support, with Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye motoring all the way to Cavite, reporters in tow, to present Mahusay to media. President Macapagal-Arroyo was informed of the progress of the operation, Defensor said, and now Mahusay is reportedly protected by no less than the Presidential Security Group.

What about Sen. Panfilo Lacson who has lost his star witness? "*Tuloy ang laban*," he says, adding that he has other witnesses and that there is documentary evidence anyway. Those bank accounts have paper trails that will eventually lead to Mike Arroyo, he claims.

God really operates in mysterious ways; there is always balance in everything He does. Because of one Jose Pidal, rich and powerful people can't sleep nights from worrying and the poor are being entertained by their predicament.

* * *

Money can't buy happiness. This was definitely confirmed by scientists at the University of Southern California.

You can say that again. Just ask Mike Arroyo, former President Estrada and the government officials whose millions have been unearthed by the Transparency Group's lifestyle checks. All their millions have bought them not happiness but problems, worry and unhappiness.

Get this: "People don't get happier by getting richer," said the USC study. Nor does "a person's wellbeing grow with increased wealth."

"Many people are under the illusion that the more money we make, the happier we'll be," said one of the scientists. "We put all our resources into making money at the expense of our family and health. (But) we don't realize that our material wants increase with the amount of money we make."

This is true, and you must have experienced this without realizing it. When our income is small, we can usually stretch it to cover family needs. When our income increases, we think we will have plenty left over. But we realize that we spend it all anyway. And when we think about it, we don't know where all that money went. The reason is that when we have more money, we see and crave many more things, and we accumulate many things we don't really need.

And, Mr. Arroyo, Mr. Estrada, listen to this: Other people think that sex and other women mean happiness, and that more money can buy them. Wrong. According to the USC study, "happiness typically came from spending quality time with loved ones and from good health."

This was confirmed by a study done at the University of Warwick, which found that a "strong marriage and good health were more likely than money to make people feel content."

So there you have it: Money, that commodity what everybody is scrambling for, can't buy happiness. That secretary or accountant you sleep with can't either. But if you are faithful to your wife and spend quality time with her your children, you'll be happier.

* * *

When I was starting out as a journalist, the owner of our newspaper was a multi-millionaire businessman with many big businesses. He was a political kingpin and the influence of his newspaper could make him get anything from the government. He was able to get his brother elected vice president of the country. I thought he must be the happiest person on earth.

I was wrong. I witnessed how the poor fellow, despite his wealth, paced his office back and forth for hours, pulling at his stubble, worrying, worrying, worrying. He seemed to be on top of the world, but he was constantly worrying about his businesses and how to pay his loans. Many businessmen are in the same boat.

On the other hand, observe the poor: It is easier to make them happy. As I said in an earlier column, give the squatter enough food for the day and he would be very happy. Give him a job and he would be happier. Give his family a roof over their heads, and they would be happiest. Give that child beggar who knocks on your car window a bigger-than-usual alms and watch his face light up with happiness. During Christmas, I usually drive around with my two granddaughters with gift-wrapped boxes of goodies which they hand to children begging in the streets. The happiness that lights up their faces infects my grandchildren with happiness.

And get this: Members of poor families are usually closer to one another than the rich ones. Rich families usually fight over their wealth; the poor have nothing to fight over. You've read so many accounts of these in the newspapers. There are at least two super-rich families currently embroiled in a fight over the wealth accumulated by their fathers. And there is that Filipino family in Australia allegedly massacred by a son who couldn't wait for his inheritance. Had they been poor, they would probably still be alive today loving one another.

The moral of this piece is: Don't covet money; it can't buy you happiness. Money, after all, is still "the root of all evil."

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: What do Gringo Honasan and Mike Arroyo have in common?

Answer: Gringo has a mistah. Mike has a Miss Toh.

Justly earned

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I WAS one of those who applauded loudly when Jose Burgos was named by the International Press Institute as one of the 50 champions of press freedom from all over the world. It was a signal honor, given in the year 2000, when the world stood at the threshold of the second millennium and was recognizing the contributions of people who had helped the 20th century take giant steps. Burgos was reckoned by his peers to have done so.

Subsequently, in the same year, the Philippine Senate unanimously adopted Resolution No. 52 "honoring Jose G. Burgos Jr. for his heroic deeds and steadfast struggle as a journalist." It was good to know this country still knew how to be grateful to those who risked their lives to give it the blessings it enjoyed.

No one deserved the award more. More than any other Filipino journalist during martial law, Burgos lived up to his calling when to do so was to court imprisonment, or death. He published We Forum, Midday, Masa and Malaya during the last few years of the Marcos regime, which was in great part why it became its last few years. We Forum was closed down in December 1982 and Burgos himself was detained. But his incarceration did little to intimidate him. Soon after being released, following an international outcry, he published Malaya, which drew an even bigger audience with its fearless exposés.

If the Edsa Revolution hadn't happened, Marcos would have rounded up his enemies and put them in jail, or six feet underground, in a last ditch effort to keep power. Burgos would have been the first to go. Thankfully, that did not happen. Burgos is still very much with us today, albeit battling a formidable disease. But he has triumphed over so many formidable odds I am sure he will do so over this one as well. You'll outlive all of us, Joe.

I am now one of those loudly applauding the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation's choice of Sheila Coronel for its Journalism Award.

When Burgos was trying the keep the light burning during the Dark Ages, Sheila was still a (very) young reporter. She went on after Edsa to become a star reporter, along with Malou Mangahas, of the revived Manila Times and thence of the Chronicle. The move from Manila Times to the Chronicle is a story in itself (the main staff of the Manila Times went on strike and left, and the Manila Times never recovered from that) but best told another day. Both Sheila and Malou stayed in the Chronicle for several years before moving on to other things. Malou went on to become editor of the Manila Times (life, or the journalistic one, moves in strange cycles) and Sheila went on to found, along with several others, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

It is for her work as head of the PCIJ that Sheila will best be known, and for which she is receiving her award. In many ways, that award is the PCIJ's, which Sheila represents. The honor is richly deserved. In a little over 10 years, the PCIJ has risen to become one of this country's pillars of strength, a no mean feat when you realize that this country's reputation for being a democratic country lies for the most part in its freedom of the press. That is the one thing other Asian countries single out as representative of Philippine democracy, in admiration or derision. Lee Kuan Yew has a near-monopoly of the derisive part. Most other countries have expressed only admiration for it, the PCIJ being among the chief reasons for it.

I myself hold that Sheila and the PCIJ have continued the work Burgos has done. Both have shown exemplary courage in the face of daunting challenges. Burgos' was, of course, the more elemental, a fist raised against a dictatorship, courage shown in the face of death. That kind of courage remains admirable to this day, and is to be found in particular outside Metro Manila, and even more in particular in Mindanao, where journalists have to risk their lives just to be able to tell their truth. I hope the journalistic institutions giving awards, local and foreign, take note of this too and make the appropriate recognitions.

The courage Sheila and the PCIJ have shown is a little more subtle. At the very least, it is courage in the face of blandishment. That, too, is by no means a mean feat, success being a natural enticement to capitulation in this country. Having seen a lot of friends triumph over the iron hand of martial law only to fall before the caress of comfort afterward (some of them are with the current government) I have little doubt about which is the more daunting enemy and demands deeper resources. Well, I've always said moral courage was superior to the physical one.

At the very most, Sheila and the PCIJ have shown the courage to be different. That is an even bigger feat in this country where the natural trajectory of success is to belong, to adapt, to leave things as one finds them. The PCIJ hasn't just exposed (this country has not lacked for investigative bodies, journalistic or otherwise), it has enlightened. It hasn't just unearthed the shenanigans of Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada (I leave them to answer the charge they have been soft on GMA), it has tried to make sense of events. In various pamphlets, magazines, (not least of them I Magazine) and books, it has allowed its readers to catch a glimpse of the dynamics of elections, the "boss" system of local politics, the nature and sources of corruption in government. This country does not lack as well for Burgos-copycats, people who have discovered *tapang* and display it ferociously in the media when they now have nothing to fear, but it sorely lacks for intelligence. The PCIJ has supplied both abundantly.

I am one of those who loudly applaud the choice of Sheila as the awardee for Journalism by the Magsaysay Foundation. I am happy for her. I am happy for this country.

Bases loaded for Lacson in Senate

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WAS what happened to Eugenio Mahusay Jr. an abduction or a rescue? Sen. Panfilo Lacson claims it was abduction but Malacañang says it was a rescue. The two camps will split hairs, but the *"kanto boy"* talk yesterday over the radio was that Lacson lost that round—*nagmukhang-tanga ang mga tao niya.* As they said, *"Pulis pa naman siya."*

I understand that Lacson's critics in the PNP are getting hoarse from laughing over the bungling of the "protective custody" under which his men were supposed to have placed Mahusay. Now the shoe is in the other foot. Some months back, Lacson twitted the PNP officials for practically allowing the notorious international terrorist Fathur al-Ghozi to walk out of the PNP prison. Now it's Lacson's turn to be red in the face. In the House of Representatives, the lawmakers were heard saying, *"Naisahan si Lacson. Mahina pala siya, hindi mahusay."*

* * *

In answering the abduction charge, Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, Udong's wedding *ninong*, said: "*Para namang hindi siya pulis. Alam naman niyang ganyan talaga ang laro ng mga pulis.*"

Actually Defensor, in driving the Mahusay family to Tagaygay in his own car, risked his life quite a bit when he went there without an armed group. The only one with a firearm was Udong's policeman brother. But it was good that Defensor didn't bring armed people since a shootout could have resulted once the guards recovered their wits, or had the bigger group which was to transfer Udong to another safehouse arrived. Besides, had Defensor brought troops, it would have looked like an abduction that would be hard to deny. Apparently the surprised guards thought Udong's family was there for a visit (Defensor stayed in the car all the time). Even as the party sped away, the guards could still have shot at them, but luckily they didn't.

* * *

The ex-janitor/messenger, who looks like a very simple man, flirted with the Lacson camp for several months, but in the end he couldn't resist the pressure to be on the same side as his family, whom he hadn't seen for two months while he was in Lacson's custody. The pressure of family is resorted to even in hostage situations: recall how the mother of Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes was requested to ask him to convince his group to lay down their arms in Oakwood. The question now is, what would Mahusay do with the affidavit he read over TV last Monday, his hands shaking visibly? He could always claim Lacson's people wrote it all for him and that for a huge amount of money he had agreed to tell lies. After all, his former fellow employees have all disowned his testimony. Lacson's camp, anticipating the "retraction," pooh-poohed it by saying that what matters, after all, are the documents obtained from Udong.

* * *

That's true: Lacson lost in the Tagaytay drama, but the ultimate drama that could affect the fate of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will be played out in the joint Senate committee hearings on l'affaire Mike A., and documents will take center stage. Here Lacson has the edge. This realization was not lost on the senators as they fought to have the right committees conduct the hearings. The minority, always solid, insisted that the two committees that would assist the blue ribbon committee, chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo, would be the committee on electoral reforms and revision of laws chaired by Sen. Edgardo Angara and the committee on banks chaired by Sen. Sergio Osmeña. Arroyo questioned why Angara had to be in the picture when his committee doesn't come in until after the end of the investigation. He wanted the ways and means committee chaired by Sen. Ralph Recto to be the third committee. Senate President Franklin Drilon, apparently not wanting to be caught in the intramurals, tossed the question to the administration-dominated rules committee chaired by Majority Leader Loren Legarda, who put it to a vote.

* * *

In the voting, it was interesting to note that three administration senators (Juan Flavier, Legarda herself and Robert Jaworski) sided with four opposition members in voting for Angara's committee, whereas three other administration senators (Francis Pangilinan, Ramon Magsaysay and Recto) voted for Recto's committee. Thus of the three committee chairs, only Arroyo is with the ruling party. The bases appear loaded in favor of Lacson. *Mukhang* Mike A. was abandoned by his wife's allies in the Senate.

By the way, acting on Joker Arroyo's insistence that he furnish the addresses of the witnesses he wanted subpoenaed, Lacson listed Victoria's and Lawrence Toh's and Kelvin Tan's addresses as the Mike Arroyo-owned LTA Building while that of Udong Mahusay was listed as "c/o Mike Defensor."

* * *

Lacson may have lost Mahusay but he had a stroke of good luck last Tuesday. Finally, after 14 months or so of being blocked by the senator and his opposition allies, Committee Report No. 237 (formerly No. 66), the controversial report of the three committees that had investigated the drug-trafficking and kidnap-for-ransom activities allegedly involving Lacson and his former PNP officers, appeared to be getting somewhere. Sen. Robert Barbers, lead chair of the three investigating committees and sponsor of the report, stood up for what was the first interpellation from opposition Sen. Vicente Sotto. Unfortunately, Barbers and Sotto spoke to a near-empty hall since the interpellation was scheduled very late in the afternoon and by then all the reporters were gone. It was once again excellent maneuvering by the opposition in a chamber supposedly dominated by administration senators.

'Sorry Ninang,' says Udong

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ONLY in the Philippines, I guess, would commentators spend so much time and effort analyzing the statement of Eugenio "Udong" Mahusay in which he apologized to "Ninang Gloria" for turning on her family but not to "Ninong Mike," who was the one he implicated in an alleged money laundering scheme, including opening a bank account under a fictitious name.

For the benefit of foreign readers, "*Ninang*" and "*Ninong*" are Filipino for "Godmother" and "Godfather," respectively, titles the President and her husband earned by virtue of their standing as wedding sponsors to Mahusay and his wife. In other cultures, the role of wedding sponsors or witnesses may not bear much weight. But in this country, the relationship between the *inaanak* (godchild) and the *ninong* and *ninang* is one fraught with mutual duty and obligation, loyalty and gratitude. It is not to be taken lightly.

That's why the media, after Udong first surfaced, made much of that fact that the First Couple had stood as sponsors during his wedding. For one, it proved just how close he was to the Macapagal-Arroyos, for a prominent couple like them would not take on such a social obligation unless they knew him intimately. For another, the special relationship they shared only underscored the extent of Udong's betrayal, for his testimony was not only damaging politically, it was also a repudiation of a personal, familial bond, an act of astounding disloyalty.

This may explain why Udong's family got into the act when they "fetched" him from his hideout in Tagaytay the other day. By going public, Udong had shamed not just himself, but his wife and all the Mahusays. But just to underscore the special meaning of the relationship between *ninong* and *inaanak*, the Mahusays sought the intercession and intervention of another *ninong*, Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, to retrieve Udong and thereby get the family back to the Arroyos' good graces.

* * *

IT hardly seems to matter at this point whether Sen. Ping Lacson's charges will hold up in court, and whether Udong was telling the truth in his original affidavit.

What's more fascinating is the human element, and how the interplay of characters and relationships in this political tempest in a teapot seems to be a microcosm of Philippine society and social relationships. In the story lies an object lesson on how culture intersects with politics, and how the personal (Udong's resentment at being accused of stealing money from his employer) can have an impact on the national (if the President indeed plans to run again in 2004).

As a godchild, Udong doubtless enjoyed the trust and confidence of the President and her husband, who may have been counting on his loyalty and gratitude and expecting him to keep all their secrets safe. But Udong, too, may have had his expectations of his *ninang* and *ninong*, foremost of which was to favor him over other individuals who did not enjoy such a special relationship, and to "bless" him with advantages that their position allowed. When he was fired on suspicion of having stolen from the First Gentleman, Udong doubtless felt betrayed as well. The Arroyos had broken their unspoken agreement to look after him and his family. In his mind, he may have felt justified in turning against them as well and telling all he knew about them to someone clearly out to do them harm.

Since we have more than three months to go before the campaign gets into high gear, there may yet be time for political wheeling-and-dealing and the trading of threats and counterthreats over this issue. The President and her husband may call for an uneasy truce with Lacson. They may choose to stonewall, or Lacson could choose to reserve his weapons for a more strategic battle.

But what happens to people like Udong who is fast using up his 15 minutes in the spotlight? When the smoke has cleared, where will he find himself? I doubt very much if he could return as a messenger for the operators in the LTA building. Maybe he could start a new career by admitting to being Jose Pidal.

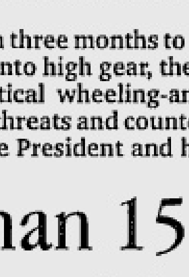
* * *

WHILE we're at it, even as Lacson's charges have yet to be filed in court or taken up by the appropriate Senate committee, they have already turned the spotlight on the role of the presidential spouse. Starting with Imelda Marcos, the spouse of the President has been perceived—and proven—as wielding power and influence way beyond the parameters of the unofficial role of first lady or first gentleman.

In the case of President Aquino, while she was not personally linked to any scandal beyond an occasional game of mahjong which she vehemently denied, the suspicions extended to her entire clan, the proverbial "Kamag-anak Inc." In the case of President Ramos, the "influential one" was not his wife but a rumored paramour as well as an adviser of sinister repute. And President Estrada—well, the influence peddling was carried on by such a wide variety of characters their comings and goings soon resembled a circus and nearly brought our economy to ruin.

Early in her term, if I recall, President Macapagal issued a directive that none of her relatives would be allowed to conduct any business transactions with any government entity. But even Mike Arroyo's friends admit that they have gone to see him, whether at the LTA building or elsewhere, to ask for favors from government. Why should the First Gentleman wield, or be perceived to wield, such power and influence? That he hasn't been all that shy about his role as negotiator and power broker only adds fuel to the fire of Lacson's allegations.

Aquino-Galman 15 (2)



HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"I KNOW how it is to lose someone," says Sgt. Ernesto Mateo, 49, in deference to the families of slain former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and Rolando Galman.

A member of Team Alpha, Mateo admits he pumped the contents of the Armalite into the body of Galman. The instruction, he says, was to shoot at anyone who tried to harm Aquino, be they friendly or enemy forces.

Mateo was also one of the soldiers who loaded the fallen Aquino into the SWAT van. The trip to Fort Bonifacio seemed so long. The adrenaline rush was high, what with a chopper hovering over them. Mateo thought they might be under attack. He had Aquino's blood on his hands, on his clothes.

His three kids, aged 25, 22 and 19, are all right, Mateo assures. His eldest, a daughter, and his son are now engineers working in the Air Force. Both were scholars of the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service. The youngest is a customs broker. Mateo's wife Bernardita is now working in the casino.

Mateo says he plants camote in the prison grounds to supplement the prison diet. He is an avid Bible reader and active Catholic lay minister. His involvement in matters of the faith has greatly eased his pain. (The convicts' stories about their faith came out last Aug. 19.) He speaks of the feelings—"*awa, tampo, galit*" (self-pity, resentment, anger)—that he used to drown in his tears.

Mateo grew up in Hacienda Luisita, the vast sugar plantation that belongs to the family of Aquino's widow, Cory, who would become president. "My family still lives there now," Mateo says pensively.

"*May hinanakit ako sa gobyerno,* (I feel resentful toward the government)," Sgt. Rodolfo Desolong, 56, blurts out. He opened the SWAT van and shot Galman. He was a soldier, he says, trained to do what he thought he should do. His career was ruined, he laments.

After they were sentenced in 1990, Desolong's wife went to Italy to work as a domestic helper for four years. One of his daughters was adopted by his sister-in-law based in Germany.

When his father died some years ago, Desolong was not allowed to leave prison. "*Ang patay ang dumalaw sa priso* (The dead visited the prison)."

Sgt. Cordova Estelo, 51, was a member of Team Alpha and also shot Galman. Remembering that day, he wonders aloud: "Why would (General Fabian) Ver congratulate the SWAT after that happened?"

"I entered the airplane first and went out last," CIC Mario Lazaga, 52, member of the boarding party that escorted Aquino, recalls. He insists it was Galman who did it.

Sgt. Claro Lat, also a member of the boarding party, and who held Aquino by the arm, is not inclined to talk about himself except to loudly confirm that he is very much alive. Lat almost died when he drank a beverage laced with something toxic. Two of his drinking buddies died.

Sgt. Rolando de Guzman, 51, now a pastor, would rather tend to a small flock of Christian believers in prison than ruminate on what has been. Finding the Lord, he feels, has lightened the burden in his heart. "*Nakakatulong sa poot.*"

A member of Team Alpha, De Guzman was in the SWAT van waiting, having been told by Capt. Felipe Valerio to wait for Aquino to come down the service stairs. After the first shot rang out, De Guzman also unloaded his .45 on Galman.

De Guzman says he had looked forward to sitting beside Aquino inside the bullet proof van. "I thought of asking him why he came home, what it was like living abroad. He was my idol."

He never got to ask the questions. "*Pagsampa sa van, kalat na ang utak. Umalalay si Artates.* (When he was loaded into the van, his brain had splattered. Artates helped me out.)"

CIC Rogelio Moreno, 47, was tagged by the court as the triggerman. A member of the boarding party that went up the plane to escort Aquino, Moreno was supposed to have shot Aquino. But Moreno's fellow convicts clear him.

The other members of the boarding party would have pointed at him by now, Moreno says wryly.

With Avsecom chief Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio dead, Capt. Romeo Bautista, Avescom intelligence director, is the highest ranking officer among the convicts. He was in the dark about a conspiracy at that time, he asserts. Not anymore, it seems. He wishes the case to be reopened. He wonders why Martinez's information has not been given attention.

During the interview, someone quotes Martinez as having said: "*Palayain na lang lahat. Ako na lang matira.* (Just set everyone free and I could be left behind.)"

When and if he gets out, Bautista says, he would like to put up a newspaper stand in his property in Cavite and be an INQUIRER distributor. A good product choice indeed.

Bautista's wife Evelyn, a military nurse, is now a lieutenant colonel. She was in the US to train in flight nursing for several months when Bautista et al. were convicted in 1990.

In a tragic way, the 15 had a role in the dramatic changes that occurred after Aquino was slain. Only, they were tagged as the villains, the small fry who bore the brunt of it all. The nation was never the same again after that. They were not the brains but they played a part in the making of a martyr and a soon-to-be-declared national hero.

There is the legal truth, but there is also the absolute truth. And the glaring scandal is that the brains behind the elaborate plot to kill Aquino have not been brought to justice.

* * *

ID finder. Last July, I lost my "high-tech" INQUIRER ID somewhere in Quezon City. Last week, jail officer Bernie Aglibot found it hanging prominently on a delivery tricycle in San Mateo. (Wow, how did it get there?) He questioned the driver, took the ID and immediately called the INQUIRER. He personally returned it to me. Thanks!

Home

YOUNG BLOOD

Wes Platon

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I HAD writing in mind when the kilometer reading said 370 on our way to Bontoc, the gateway to that gem in the far north, our escape and destination: Sagada. I pour this out only now.

Yes, the low-hanging mist hits you with memories of Baguio, which is now a cliché, or majestic Mt. Pulag, yet, something beats differently, and that's my heart calling out, "Discover!"

We set out with Boston, all of 22 years old and already a 12-year pro as a guide. Tailing his trails of local cigarette smoke, past the bell and church, we tiptoed through a cemetery toward a new take on death and the next life: the hanging coffins. The place was called Echo Valley, but no one dared test it. So why did they do it, I mean, hang and stack their dead on sheer rock faces and cave walls dank? Boston and his people believed six feet under was overkill, so they let their dead breathe, and speak as the wind whistles past, roam the valley, there but unseen.

Or perhaps weep in the rain? Defacing these cultural monuments has become a pastime for many visitors. And that afternoon, rain fell on our party, like some warning. We found shelter at a cave mouth, where the Latang underground river snaked in and through. With darkness closing in, we moved on and into the rain again.

We found dinner at The Yogurt House, and before that, maybe 20 paces back, some postcards at P10 each. A slight drizzle fell as we walked back to St. Joseph's Inn where we had a good night's sleep.

That was the first day, and it stuck like Velcro.

Just like the next four, when we tried second-guessing the weather and failed, as the mornings turned sunny and the afternoons rainy. We made the 200-step descent down cave Lumiang's mouth, negotiating through its pools and bat-filled caverns. We had a killer view in Kiltepan, which vanished when rain clouds caught up with us. We rode horses around quaint Lake Danom and hiked up Mount Ampacao, within sight of Mount Polis. Capping it all off, we trekked to Bomod-ok Falls. Unparalleled pleasure, simply put.

Friends and family back in Manila were worried sick. Typhoon Chedeng was unleashing her fury that time, and we were right smack in the middle of her path, on our way home, on a dirt road somewhere in Benguet, perhaps at Highest Point, while blasting held up the traffic.

No one in our party knew or cared. We wanted to forget the madding crowd and the city. And for five days, we had done just that. And already, I've got Batanes and Cleopatra's Needle in my sights for next summer.

We are not getting any younger. Those who would rather get their feet wet and grab some soul candy before they push any pencils, should do themselves a favor and see the Philippines. It is home, after all. Your home.

Wes Platon, 25, is a high school chemistry teacher at Assumption Antipolo.

Crazy

Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña

"I REALLY need a psychiatrist," I said.

My sister let out a howl of laughter, saying that was the only thing I said to her all day that made sense. But she stopped laughing when she saw my face all red from efforts to keep myself from crying. On my hands were pictures of my homeland. I had been staring at them as if in a trance before I made that declaration.

It has been eight years since I left Batanes to go to college, and I feel homesick every day, every minute. If I am not openly crying, the longing is always in the corner of my mind and heart, throbbing, like a fresh wound.

I have long concluded that something must be wrong with me. My friends agree after noting my chronic homesickness.

I was born in a place where time seems to stand still. I grew up in a place where everybody knows everybody else, where everything seems to be just within reach, where it is clear God plays favorites.

What pains me is that I never realized how special and extraordinary is my home until I left, until coming home had become a rare opportunity. Batanes can only be reached by plane, a form of transportation that provides no guarantee that it will get you there. During holidays especially, Ivatans who want to spend the holidays with love ones in Batanes have to fight for plane seats.

Aside from the big hole it makes in your pocket; you have to cry, scream and pray for a plane ticket. I have experienced being stranded in a strange place because the elements seemed bent on keeping the anticipation high. Once, my brother and I had to wait for five days and four nights in Laoag for the next flight home. But even though my vacation had been cut short by five precious days, setting foot on Batanes after the last flight the day before Christmas never felt more magical.

What makes my home special is that it is almost like heaven. It is so far literally and figuratively that I long for its skies and sacred landscape almost the same way my lungs need air. There the sky is bluer, the hills greener, the sunsets more beautiful, the moon bigger and brighter. And there's got to be a million more stars if you look at them from Batanes.

That was why staring at a picture of my family frolicking in the blue sea during one of our outings last year was too much for me. And that's when I confessed that I needed professional help.

My sister joked that unfortunately Filipinos seldom see a shrink for counseling, and if I did, people might think I have lost my mind.

I kept asking if it was me or my homeland? I have concluded that it's got to be my homeland. It's too beautiful to leave and my absence while pursuing my material dreams in strange places is what's driving me crazy.

Every day, I long for those sunsets, the setting sun spreading its orange rays on the plaza, where children, just out of their classrooms run free; where mommies walk their babies, and toddlers bask in the warmth of the sunset; where my Dad plays tennis like he has always done since he could carry a racket and my Mom watches, cheering silently every passing shot my Dad unleashes; where tired students chatter about Math and boys while slowly making their way home; where the scorching summers drive you mad and the coldness of December nights bite through three layers of clothing.

The past eight years have not blurred those images in my mind. My heart both breaks and soars whenever I think of home. I cry and laugh at the same time. Crazy? No, just in love with my homeland.

Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña, 24, works as a writer at the Bureau of Agricultural Research.

LETTERS

Malacañang's 'consuelo de bobo' for media

AFTER THE BERATING by Malacañang of GMA 7 reporter Tina Panganiban-Perez for allegedly abetting rebellion, it would be wrong to assume that a warm embrace, a hearty dinner and roses have undone that incident's chilling implications on press freedom.

While the government says it is not in any way curtailing press freedom, access to information, free movement and the right to privacy of our colleagues in the mainstream media continue to be violated.

Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. admitted that journalists and media workers, allegedly maintaining links with rebel groups, have been put under surveillance. In a forum initiated by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and International Federation of Journalists this June, Lt. Gen. Ernesto Carolina, deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, disclosed that the military keeps an eye on journalists. Carolina even revealed the green-yellow-orange-red categorization. The colors, he said, indicate the level of involvement of journalists with the so-called enemies of the state.

The campus press is not at all surprised.

Student journalists from Philippine Collegian (University of the Philippines-Diliman), Catalyst (Polytechnic University of the Philippines), Manila Collegian (UP-Manila), Tandem (University of Northern Philippines) and Ang Pamantasan (Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila) reported cases of surveillance via the student intelligence network (SIN). The SIN is a secret component of the National Services Training Program (formerly ROTC). Agents report directly to Camp Aguinaldo where they also undergo weekly training, this was revealed by the slain University of Santo Tomas ROTC cadet Mark Wilson Chua before his death.

Rhetorics and *consuelo de bobo* won't fix the damage. Besides, this is not about Perez's alone. This is about media responsibility. This is about truth and press freedom.

—RONALYN V. OLEA,
national president, College Editors Guild Of The Philippines, 790-A Sisa St., Sampaloc, Manila

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Dancing down the Chao Phrya

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

NEXT time you're in Bangkok, take one of the many riverboat night tours that go down the Chao Phrya, the river of kings. The cruise can be a treat, since you don't see much of the pollution, your attention focused on the splendidly lit-up temples and the Grand Palace along the river.

Typically Asian, the tours will offer karaoke and dancing to Thai country music, which I usually find a bit difficult to take, except when in the company of good friends.

Which is why I'm feeling bad that this year I'm unable to join a group of friends as they dance down the Chao Phrya. These are the participants who come from all over the region to participate in a training workshop organized by the Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender and Sexuality. (With such a long and unwieldy name, I'm going to just use the word "consortium" for the rest of the column.)

For about a year now, I've been quite busy helping to organize the consortium, which includes several universities in the region. There are two secretariats, one based at Mahidol University in Thailand and the other, I am proud to say, at the University of the Philippines. The consortium handles several programs for training and research.

I see the consortium as an opportunity for the Philippines to get back into the mainstream of human resources development in the region. Up until the 1980s, the Philippines was a leading center for learning, bringing in scholars from throughout the region to train in agriculture, medicine, public health, the social sciences. Today, for a number of reasons, the Philippines has lagged behind as a regional training center. I suspect the main reason people no longer think of the Philippines as training grounds is that while we are good at advising other countries on what to do, we just can't seem to get our own act together. There are times, when Filipinos lecture at regional conferences, with self-confidence and in the most elegant English, where I can see the audience thinking, "If you're so smart then why are you so poor?"

Working with the consortium has made me think harder, too, about how we've estranged ourselves from the region, preferring to align ourselves with the West, or more specifically, with Mother America in our politics and lifestyles. As we distance ourselves from Southeast Asia, we lose part of our history, forgetting that during the precolonial period, there were in fact economic and political ties between our islands and the rest of Southeast Asia, as well as China.

We forget that we share so many common problems even today—from traffic to gender inequities—rooted in a common past. I'll write about the reasons for these similarities in future columns but for now, I just want to say we stand to gain from looking at our neighbors, and engaging in dialogue, rather than lecturing as experts.

In the consortium's ongoing workshop, which I had to leave early because of teaching duties at home, we had two Filipinos among the 24 participants and I could see they were enjoying their discovery of Southeast Asia, bonding closely with the Lao, Cambodians, Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, Malaysians, Chinese and Indonesians. On a trip to the market last week, two of my "students" turned the tables around, teaching me how to pick out sturdy lotus plants by looking at their roots, stems, flowers. Back in the bus, the Cambodians offered us lotus pods. I'd always thought they were for decoration and only now learned you could peel them open to get the seeds, which are said to have a calming effect.

There's been more, of course, to the interactions than lotus seed eating. What has always struck me during our workshops are the way Southeast Asians refer to the past, the Vietnamese to "the war" and the Cambodians to "the genocide." The past is still often present, painfully. Reviewing proposals for research grants, there was one from Vietnam that wanted to look at the sexual health of the disabled. The proposal pointed out that 10 percent of the Vietnamese population have a major disability. This is more than 25 years after the end of the Vietnam War.

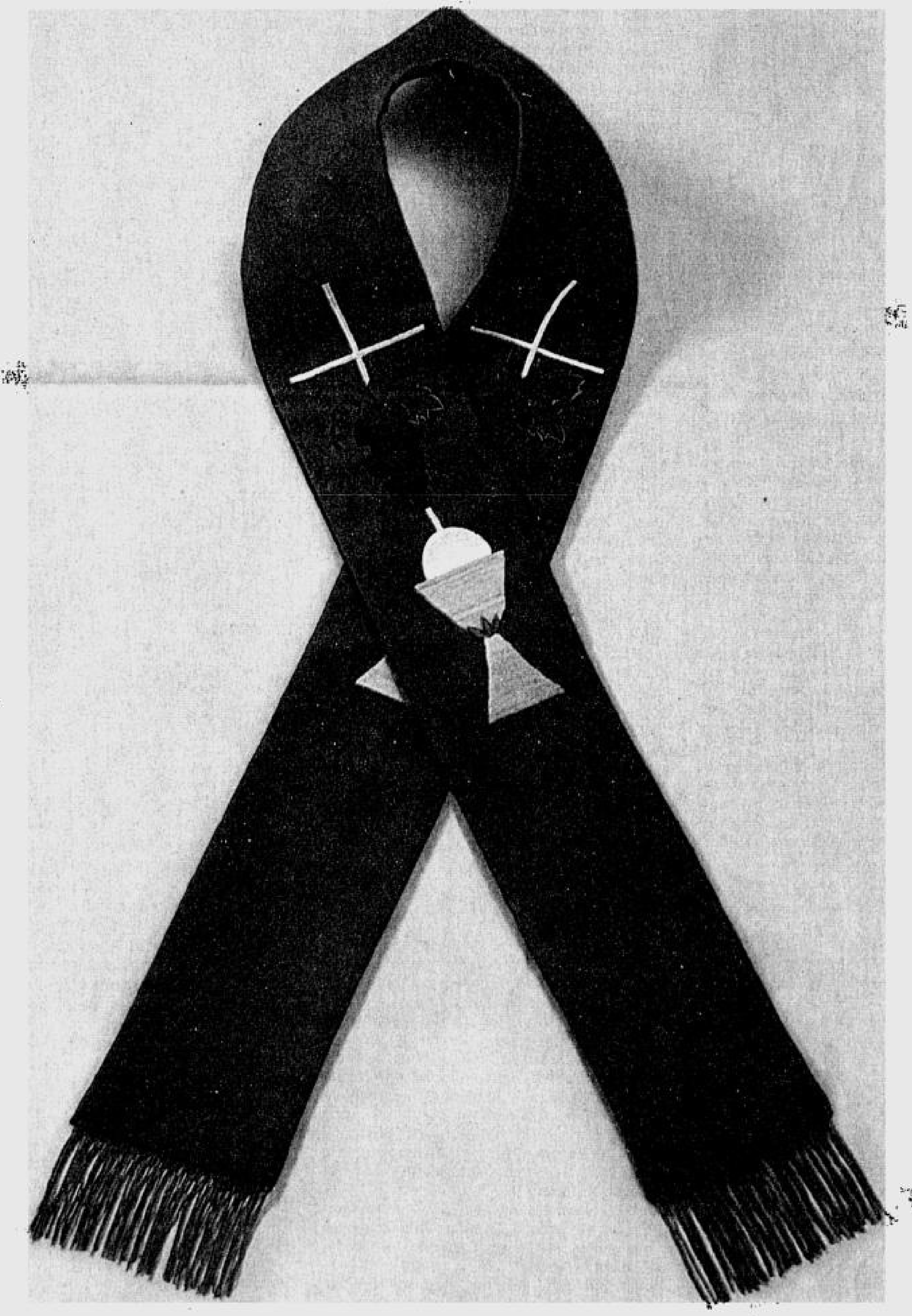
Working with our Southeast Asian neighbors helps me appreciate more the paradoxes of society and history. I think of Cambodia and its Angkor Wat civilization dating back to the 10th century, and how its capital Phnom Penh was once described as the Paris of the East. Today, my students refer, with bitterness and sadness, to "the genocide," almost as if their history is now divided between "before" and "after" that holocaust. Human history, we are reminded by Cambodia (and the Philippines), is not marked by linear progress. Our frailties and our arrogance mean all kinds of detours, even moving backwards.

For all the talk of Buddhism and its messages of peace, the region has had its share of ruthless and bloody wars and civil conflicts. There is some peace now, but it remains tenuous, given the global mood for war and the penchant of local politicians to whip up chauvinist feelings.

But I'm optimistic. At this last workshop, one of the Vietnamese students brought me a gift from another Vietnamese who had attended last year's workshop. Last year I had read out poetry by the 19th century Vietnamese woman poet Ho Xuan Huong. This time, my Vietnamese student sent me a long poem, written in the 18th century by Dang Tran Con amid a civil war.

The poem, "Lament of the Soldier's Wife," should make us think hard, every time we watch the epic war films that are so popular these days in Asia. Let me share just one passage: "Your wife must be as son/ to your parents, as father/ to your child, to comfort the old and teach the young, there is none/ but myself, for how long must I/ suffer a wounded heart?"

I will miss the cruise down the Chao Phrya not so much for the dancing itself as the spirit of carefree camaraderie, a respite from a troubled past, maybe even a ritual of hope and renewal for the future.



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US, North Korea envoys shake hands

BEIJING—The United States, North Korea and four other nations convened an extraordinary six-way meeting Wednesday, working to resolve a dispute over the North's nuclear program even as Pyongyang repeated its demand for a nonaggression treaty from Washington.

Around a vast hexagonal table behind the high brick walls of the state guest house of China, diplomats from all six nations shook hands and crisply got down to business at 9:04 a.m.

"I am very happy the six countries are all here," Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the assembled diplomats before the meeting was closed to reporters.

Russia, Japan and South Korea are also participating. All have direct stakes in the region in general and the North's nuclear program in particular. China, the host country, called for a "calm and patient attitude."

The United States says North Korea must shut down its nuclear program immediately, while Pyongyang demands guarantees of security and economic aid. US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and North Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Yong-il were among those shaking hands before the talks began, and then their delegations were seated next to each other for the meeting.

North Korea repeated its demand for a nonaggression pact from the South's key ally—the United States—saying it would not give up its "nuclear deterrent force" for anything less than that.

The United States should "clarify its will to make a switchover in its hostile policy toward (North Korea) and conclude a nonaggression treaty with it," Rodong Sinmun, the North's official newspaper, said in a commentary carried by KCNA, the North's official news agency.

US officials say they believe North Korea has one or two nuclear weapons, and experts believe it could produce five to six more in a few months. The North has withdrawn from key international agreements in recent months, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Last October, according to the United States, North Korea acknowledged having a secret nuclear program, beginning the standoff and war of words that led to this week's talks. US President George W. Bush already was wary of North Korea, calling it in a January 2002 speech part of an "axis of evil."

Shin Bong-kil, spokesperson for the South Korean delegation, said the morning session, which lasted almost five hours, proceeded in a "stable, quiet, smooth way." He said there were "no big deviations" from the expected agenda.

Both Kelly's and Kim's addresses, which talked about the history of the nuclear issue dividing them, lasted about an hour, Shin said. *AP*

HEADS of delegation join hands before their talks in Beijing on Aug. 27. From left, Mitoji Yabunaka, director general for Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the foreign ministry of Japan; James Kelly, US assistant secretary; Kim Yong-il, North Korea's deputy foreign minister; Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi; Alexander Losiukov, Russian deputy foreign minister and Lee Soo-Hyuck, South Korean deputy minister of foreign affairs and trade. AP

Jemaah cleric threatens judges

JAKARTA—Alleged terror group chief Abu Bakar Bashir warned judges on Wednesday they would face the wrath of God if they find him guilty next Tuesday in his treason trial.

"If the panel of judges agrees with the evil accusations and indictment of the prosecutor then it will mean that this court is also lurching toward evil and tyranny and the responsibility, in the sight of God, will be on the shoulders of the panel of judges," said Bashir.

The charges against him were inspired by "infidel America," the Indonesian Muslim cleric told the court in his final defense plea before the verdict on Sept. 2.

Prosecutors say Bashir heads the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah terror network. They want him jailed for 15 years for allegedly trying to topple the Indonesian government through terror and to set up an Islamic state.

JI is blamed for a string of deadly bombings in recent years, including the Bali attack last October which killed 202 people and this month's Jakarta hotel blast in which 12 people died. *AFP*

Vendor killed as militants elude Israel missile strike

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—The Palestinian security chief criticized Israel for a series of strikes against Palestinian militants, saying the killings will bring only revenge and further bloodshed.

Speaking Tuesday night after a botched Israeli missile attack that killed one bystander and wounded 26, security chief Mohammed Dahlan said Israel must stop the killings if it "wants to reverse the situation back to the way it was a week ago."

"The policy of assassination will bring only revenge and the continuation of the cycle of violence," Dahlan said.

Tuesday's attack was aimed at a carload of Hamas militants but killed only a 65-year-old water pipe vendor who was sitting outside his shop just north of Gaza City when missiles fired from an Israeli helicopter hit nearby. It was the third Israeli missile strike in five days.

Israel has said every Hamas militant is a potential target for "liquidation"—a response to a Hamas bus bombing that killed 21 people on a Jerusalem bus last week.

But three Hamas members who were the target of Tuesday's strike were able to flee their car on the crowded street before the missiles hit, witnesses said. Doctors said five children were among the injured. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Scathing report of Nasa

WASHINGTON—The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration's overconfident management and loss of focus on safety "were as much a cause" of the Columbia accident as the chunk of foam that dealt a deadly blow to the space shuttle's left wing, investigators concluded. The scathing 248-page report released Tuesday warned that without drastic changes, another disaster is likely. In the report, which came almost seven months to the day after the spacecraft disintegrated over Texas, the Columbia Accident Investigation Board said the shuttle was not "inherently unsafe," but issued a series of recommendations that it insisted must be implemented for a safe return to flight. Investigators added: "Nasa's blind spot is it believes it has a strong safety culture." *AP*

Serious repercussions for Blair

LONDON—Whatever the results of the ongoing Hutton inquiry, to which he will testify on Thursday, Prime Minister Tony Blair will face serious repercussions across a range of policy issues, according to commentators here. The inquiry into the apparent suicide of government scientist David Kelly, the man behind allegations that Blair's office "sexed up" the case for war in Iraq, has already produced a vast flood of information, much of it damaging to the government's credibility. Some commentators argue that even the government's hopes of joining the European single currency will go up in smoke when the public inquiry under the chairmanship of Justice Hutton delivers its conclusions. *AP*

Wrongful conviction of serial rapist

ST. LOUIS, Missouri—A man wrongly convicted as a serial rapist was enjoying his first taste of freedom Tuesday after clearing his name through DNA evidence, in the 136th such case involving the technology. Lonnie Erby served 17 years behind bars for the rapes of three teenage girls in St. Louis in 1985, all of whom identified him in lineups. The 49-year-old requested DNA tests of forensic evidence as early as 1988, but the prosecutors' office initially opposed the request, saying it would unnecessarily upset the victims and their families without definitively establishing Erby's innocence. *AP*

Taiwan's stealth missile boat

ILAN, Taiwan—Taiwan's military authorities debuted the locally designed "stealth" missile boat Wednesday in a rehearsal ahead of upcoming war games. A Hsiungfeng II ship-to-ship missile, designed with a range of 150 km, was launched from the 170-ton vessel on waters off the Li Tse Chien beach in Ilan county, northern Taiwan. The Navy plans to build 30 such missile boats under the "Kuanghwa Six Project." Analysts said the boat, designed to reduce the reflection of radar waves, may be able to "passively" receive intelligence collected by other Taiwan warships and enable the fleet to launch missile blitzes against targeted enemy warships without exposing their location. *AFP*

Afghan mountain pass recaptured

KABUL—American and Afghan forces killed about a dozen insurgents Wednesday and recaptured a mountain pass in southeastern Afghanistan —the scene of heavy fighting and US bombardments this week, a local official said. Suspected Taliban guerrillas were believed to still be hiding in the rugged area in Zabul province, where US and Afghan soldiers reoccupied the Moray Pass, said Khalil Hotak, chief of the provincial intelligence service. Some of the fighters escaped toward Uruzgan province to the west, Hotak said. *AP*

Don't smile—you're being photographed

TORONTO—Close you mouth. Look into the camera. Don't smile. Don't frown. Canadians applying for passports must now submit photos showing their "neutral expressions," meaning they cannot be smiling, frowning, glaring or grimacing in the pictures, the Canadian Passport Office said. The government is complying with recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization aimed at making it easier for security personnel to recognize passport holders around the world, Suzanne Meunier, a spokesperson for the Canadian Passport Office, which issued new specifications for passport photos, told the Globe and Mail newspaper. *AP*

Mixed emotions on transcripts

NEWARK, New Jersey—Leila Negron, whose husband was killed at the World Trade Center, dreads hearing the details of the emergency calls made from the twin towers that day. "For me and my children, it's like being slapped in the face with it happening again," said Negron, 36, whose husband, Peter, worked at the trade center as an environmental specialist. The impending release of the transcripts of the calls is evoking a range of responses from victims' families less than three weeks before the second anniversary of the Sept. 11 attack that killed 2,792 people. A state judge ruled Friday that the transcripts must be released by the close of business Thursday, rejecting a bid by Port Authority, which owned the trade center, to back out of an agreement it made last month with The New York Times. *AP*

Bomb used points to Islamic militants

BOMBAY, India—The highly potent RDX explosive, a favorite of Islamic guerrillas in Kashmir, was used in the twin bombings in Bombay this week, police said Wednesday, bolstering the government's assertion that Muslim militants carried out the city's worst terrorist attack in a decade.

At least 51 people were killed and 156 injured in the explosions Monday outside the Gateway of India, a historical landmark, and Zaveri Bazaar, a gold and diamond market. Police Commissioner Ranjit Sharma said that preliminary investigations indicated RDX was used in both the blasts.

"Forensic reports are awaited but we suspect that a small quantity of RDX is responsible for creating this damage," Sharma told The Associated Press. He said the large number of casualties and damage indicated the use of RDX.

Indian security officials say RDX is almost always used by Islamic militants in Kashmir, where separatists are fighting Indian forces.

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani on Tuesday blamed the bombings on Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, a pro-Pakistan Kashmiri militant group.

RDX was last known to have been used in Bombay in the March 1993 serial bombings that killed more than 250 people. RDX is a white crystalline solid usually used in mixtures with other explosives, oils, or waxes, and is rarely used alone.

It is a highly lethal military explosive, packing more than 150 percent of the power of TNT. One kilogram of RDX in a bomb can blow up a large commercial aircraft. *AP*

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Disgruntled gov't troops defect to NPA

BUTUAN CITY—At least two soldiers and seven militiamen went underground in San Luis, Agusan del Sur by joining communist insurgents, the military and the New People's Army (NPA) confirmed yesterday.

Military officials had earlier declined to confirm the defection.

Col. Narciso Alamag, civil relations officer of the 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said they were still checking the report.

But Maj. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, 4th ID commander, told Bombo Radyo in a separate interview that the defection was real.

Balaoing only identified two of the turncoats.

He said one of them, Pfc. Edward Querante, has been under investigation for his alleged involvement in illegal sale of arms to finance his drug habits.

"The defectors were all detailed at the Charlie Company of the Army's 29th IB based in San Luis," Balaoing added.

The National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao said the reason the government troops turned their backs on the military was that they were disgruntled by massive corruption, abuses and maltreatment.

George Madlos, NDF spokesperson, said there were only nine defectors on Aug. 7, but a total of 40 militiamen, led by Querante and Pfc. Boboy Hassad, deserted their posts.

Madlos said the other deserters have not joined the NPA yet but they were hiding in a rebel-controlled area.

"We are optimistic that more of them would be joining us," he said.

Madlos said Querante and the other deserters had been complaining about corruption in the military, the non-issuance of combat and food supplies, delay in the release of salaries and abuse committed by other soldiers on women.

"Their complaints validated the top-to-bottom rottenness of the AFP hierarchy," Madlos said in a statement.

He said Querante and the other defectors turned in their nine government-issued firearms, including an M-203 grenade launcher, two M-16 rifles, 2 M-14 assault rifles and five Garand rifles.

Madlos again called on soldiers to go underground and work together with the NPA to overthrow the government.

"The movement is sincere to you. To those who wish to serve the interest of the people outside the AFP service, the NPA welcome you to its folds," he said.

A report by Agence France Presse said at least 60 government militiamen had defected.

Some, however, were later arrested by the military, according to Madlos. *Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Newsmen condemn killing

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—As the slain radioman and columnist Noel Villarante was laid to rest Tuesday, newsmen vowed they will exhaust all means to help and press authorities to speed up the capture of his killers. DzRH reporter Benjie de Galicia, president of the Camp Vicente Lim Press Corps (CVLPC), earlier said the group would do everything to assist the authorities to immediately get at the bottom of the crime. De Galicia condemned the cold-blooded killing, as he vowed: "This will be the last violence inflicted on a members of the press." Broadcaster Waldy Carbonnel of the National Press Club also condemned the killing. Carbonnel heads the independent task force created by the NPC to investigate the crime.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Dengue kills 3 kids

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The deadly dengue virus claimed the lives of three more children, raising the number of fatalities to five this month alone, the city health office said. In Barangay Apopong alone, which was recently declared a calamity area, several other children have been hospitalized because of the mosquito-borne disease. Dr. Fidel Penamante, city health chief, said fogging operations were being conducted to reduce the population of dengue-carrying tiger mosquitoes, but said there was still no substitute for cleanliness.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Drug pusher slain

DAVAO CITY—A suspected drug pusher was shot dead in Purok Uno, Bansalan, Davao del Sur on Sunday night. Police said the victim, Mark Anthony Alano, was sitting outside his house at 8 p.m. Sunday when two men on board a motorcycle arrived and shot him. Responding policemen from the Bansalan police station recovered three bullet shells of .45 cal. pistols from the crime scene.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Village guards killed

BAYAMBANG, Pangasinan—Unidentified gunmen shot dead two village guards of Barangay Sanlibo on Monday night while the guards were patrolling the village. Rogelio Macasieb, Sanlibo Barangay Chair, identified the victims as Severino Soriano and Donato Jimenez. Macasieb said they were looking into reports that cattle rustlers attacked the village guards. On Aug. 8, the barangay guards ran after suspected cattle rustlers and recovered three of the four cows taken by the suspects. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Councilor sacked

MARIVELES, Bataan—A town councilor, who took his fellow councilor and the municipal administrator hostage last month, has been expelled by the municipal council from its sessions "for violating internal rules." Councilor Rodante Cansino said members of the municipal council, in a resolution, voted unanimously to expel Councilor Norberto Venturina. Venturina took hostage for two hours Councilor Hernando del Rosario and Leonardo Mallari, the municipal administrator, inside a restaurant in Barangay Alas-asin here.

Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

P28-M irrigation project

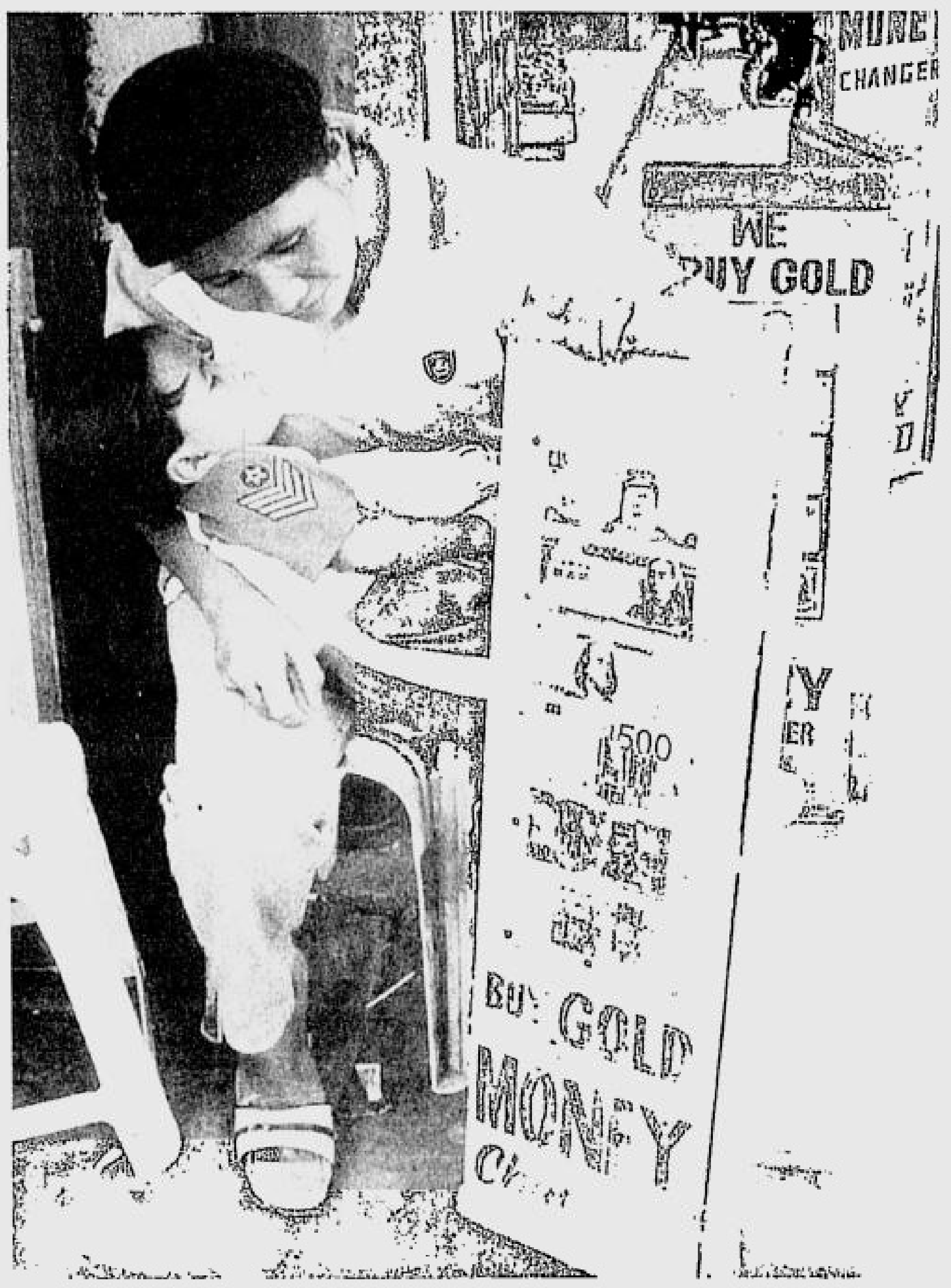
DUMAGUETE CITY—The Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) has agreed to finance P28 million worth of irrigation projects in three towns of Negros Oriental. Fr. Francis Duran, Negros Oriental special projects coordinator, said the project will benefit 600 farmers and cover 1,400 hectares in Tamlang Valley in Valencia, Sta. Catalina and Siaton. Once irrigated, he said, the valley will be planted with rice, corn and vegetables. Duran said the project will start next year and will be finished in 18 months.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Trader killed

BACOLOD CITY—A businesswoman was killed while her husband was wounded last Sunday after an armed suspect robbed their mini-grocery on Del Pilar Street, Hinigaran town, Negros Occidental. Killed was Ofelia Valencia, 52. Her husband Domingo, 51, suffered a bullet wound in the stomach. Senior Insp. Placido Composa, Hinigaran police chief, said a man armed with a .45 cal. pistol robbed the store owned by the couple in Hinigaran, 60.3 kilometers south of here. The suspect shot Ofelia when she called for help. Domingo, who responded, was also shot. Composa said the suspect fled with at least P5,000 to P10,000 on board a motorcycle driven by a still unidentified person.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau



CURRENCY SLIDE REUTERS

A woman fixes her money changing stall in Zamboanga City amid a busy currency market that has seen the peso rise and fall. President Macapagal-Arroyo has warned against speculation to stop the peso's further slide.

Army says new Sayyaf bombing plot uncovered

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The military Tuesday said the Abu Sayyaf has not only plotted the bombing of this city but it also planned to launch terror attacks in other parts of Mindanao.

Southern Command chief Lt. General Roy Kyamko said the attacks were aimed at avenging the death of Abdulmukim Ong Edris, the Abu Sayyaf bandit who escaped from Camp Crame with Indonesian bomber Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi.

Edris was killed in Sultan Naga Dimaporo in Lanao del Norte while allegedly trying to escape after he was arrested.

Kyamko said the threats were not empty as the military monitored the presence of Abu Sayyaf gunmen here and in Western Mindanao.

"Some of them are here, (ready) to carry out their attack, but their plans were preempted. But if we put down our guards, definitely they will win," Kyamko told the INQUIRER.

He said Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani, Basilan-based Hamsiraji Sali and Isnilon Hapilon "are directing the planned attacks."

He said Janjalani was not in Western Mindanao but he was "in some places giving orders."

Janjalani was believed to be hiding in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat with at least 50 of his men.

The discovery of the terror plot was brought about by the arrest last week of at least two bandits in Basilan.

AFP chief Gen. Narciso Abaya said brothers Asirin Suhod alias Gamal Dawani and Popong; and Salahim Suhod, alias Salahim Dawani and Abu Tajib, were arrested by elements of the Navy's Special Warfare and Action Group (SWAG) and the Army's special forces in Sangbuey Island in Lantawan, Basilan on Aug. 19.

Abaya said a tipster informed the military of the presence of the Suhods, who carry a P1 million bounty on their head, in Sangbuey where operations were immediately launched.

Aside from being involved in a series of bombings in Western Mindanao, which killed more than a dozen people last year, the suspects were also main players in the Sipadan hostage-taking and the beheading of 12 locals in Balobo in Lamitan, Basilan on Aug. 8, 2001.

On Oct. 2, 2002, four people, including an American serviceman, were killed when a bomb exploded near the Southcom headquarters.

Fifteen days later, another bomb exploded at the shopping mall here killing at least 12 people and wounding more than 200 others. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mayor raises brouhaha over clean, green awards

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—La Castellana Mayor Enrico Elumba has protested the result of the 2003 Gawad Pangulo sa Kapaligiran Awards in Western Visayas where his municipality lost to Dumarao town, Capiz.

Elumba complained to Local Governments Secretary Jose Lina Jr., alleging that La Castellana has been "cheated of the honor it deserves."

He sought a re-evaluation for the Category A level by "evaluators of probity and integrity."

"We are making this protest because we want justice to be done. The main reason of the evaluators this time for ranking us second only is the alleged lack of community participation," which is not true, he said.

Elumba said the panel members saw residents of Dumarao actively cleaning their community when they went to the town for the evaluation.

He said they explained to the evaluators that the residents of La Castellana did not clean their surroundings only during the period of evaluation.

Since 1998, the mayor said "cleaning and greening" have become the way of life of the residents of La Castellana.

"We explained that every household cleans its yard early in the morning and late in the afternoon," Elumba said.

So when the evaluators arrived at about 10 a.m. last Aug. 6, 2003, he said, they did not see the community sweeping their yards anymore. The panel members left at 4 p.m.

"When they (the evaluators) came everything was already spic and span," he said.

Elumba also said the evaluators were from Panay Island and they had no clear-cut guidelines on how the evaluation should be done.

He also noted some inconsistencies because the representative from non-government organizations who evaluated La Castellana was not the same evaluator in Panay.

Elumba said they had not been furnished a score chart on how La Castellana was ranked compared with other contenders.

Body of Pinoy UN worker to arrive Sunday

MALOLOS CITY—Relatives of Ranillo Buenaventura, a Filipino employee of the United Nations who was killed in a truck bombing in Baghdad last week, left the country on Tuesday night to fetch Buenaventura's body in Iraq.

Neighbors of the Buenaventuras in Barangay Catmon here said they were expecting the body to arrive on Sunday.

Buenaventura's relatives declined requests for an interview. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Investments in ARMM reach ₱368M, say execs

DAVAO CITY—Despite its bad image because of peace and order problems, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) registered a net investment of P368 million for the first six months of the year alone.

Altas Tulawie, chief of the ARMM's Regional Board of Investments, said that even with the "kind of atmosphere" in the region, "there are still a number of investors willing to infuse money."

Tulawie said the bulk of the investment funds went into transportation and the agriculture sector.

These included the P380 million expansion undertaken by Ardexcor for its Cavendish banana plantation in Buluan, Maguindanao.

The investments also created at least 636 new jobs according to Tulawie.

He admitted that some investors have recently withheld their capital after the series of bombings in Davao City and Zamboanga City.

"(But) they are just holding on to their investments, they are not stopping them," Tulawie said.

In Cotabato City, officials of the ARMM said they were now ready to compete with more developed areas of the country as far as attracting investments was concerned.

ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussein signed into law on Wednesday the Regional Economic Zone Authority (Reza) to transform the region into an investment-friendly area.

Hussein signed the law ahead of next month's second ARMM Business Council conference in Marawi City. *Joel Escovilla and Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov't lawyers back farmers' land claims

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE OFFICE of the Solicitor General has supported a motion by 65 farmers to appeal for the second time a ruling by the Supreme Court disregarding the awarding of 254 hectares of farmland in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The farmers, all beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in Barangay Casile, are hoping that the SC will reverse a decision of its Special First Division on Oct. 12, 2001 which set aside a Court of Appeals ruling that upheld the distribution of the land owned by the Yulo family.

The Yulos, through the Sta. Rosa Realty Development Corp. (SRDC), had questioned the CA ruling, presenting a certification that the piece of property was a watershed area and inalienable.

The Special First Division, in a decision penned by retired Associate Justice Bernardo Pardo, granted the SRDC's petition and remanded the case to the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (Darab) for review, while staying a temporary restraining order issued in 1993 barring farming activities in the property.

But Assistant Solicitor General Nestor Ballacillo, representing the CA and the Darab, supported the farmers' second motion for reconsideration.

In an oral argument at the Special First Division on Aug. 13, Ballacillo expressed the view that the motion should be granted on two "important grounds."

First, the SRDC was not claiming the portion being declared as a watershed, and therefore the government has full control of its disposition. Second, the Darab and the CA did not have the opportunity to assess a report of the Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) certifying that the property was a watershed.

Lawyer Efren Mercado, counsel for the farmers, argued that the Oct. 12, 2001 decision was "unconstitutional, contrary to law, contrary to jurisprudence and contrary to evidence."

He cited Rule 45 of the Rules of Court which states that a case is appealed to the SC only on questions of law and not on questions of facts.

"The petitioner (SRDC) is deemed to have waived its right to present evidence and it is now too late to be presenting the same. It follows that the petitioner is raising only questions of facts and not questions of law," he said.

Countdown for Justice

WAPILE

IT is exactly 472 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

Farmers prepare march, rally to press Gloria to slow down free trade

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Farmers here will march with key peasant groups from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao next month to ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to divulge how her government plans to fight for beleaguered local industries in a new round of free trade talks in Mexico.

Johnny Andiso, president of the Benguet Federation of Farmers, acknowledged in a press briefing here recently that the Macapagal administration never even obtained their sentiment for the Philippine delegation to the 5th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Cancun City, Mexico on Sept. 10 to 14.

The Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI) told Benguet farmers on Monday here that the Cancun conference will vote on a proposed resolution from the United States and the European Union that will allow them unusual trade tariff privileges.

By changing the rules established by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1993, the American and European proposals will aggravate the impact of another draft agreement on agriculture, penned by Stuart Harbinson, chair of the WTO agriculture committee. The Harbinson Draft imposes another 30 percent tariff cut on Philippine farm products.

From 40 to zero

The original GATT prescribes 2004 as the year when all 144 WTO-member nations are mandated to start cutting their import tariffs from an initial 40 percent to zero in the following years.

"What we most fear from (Ms Macapagal) is that she can simply telephone the Philippine delegation to Cancun (led by Trade Secretary Mar Roxas III) and support the US resolution, once she is compelled by (US President George W.) Bush," said Riza Bernabe, an economist of the PPI.

"We already spoke to Roxas, and he concedes that (despite the thoroughly studied positions from other Philippine sectors), the delegation's final vote on the two new WTO agreements will rely on the President's decision," she said.

"We never know what is going on . . . (and yet we suffer grievously) when the government allows (big business) to import salad vegetables that displace us from our traditional markets," Andiso said.

Gov. Raul Molintas said Benguet farms supply 25 percent of the country's vegetable demand, and 80 percent of these end up in Metro Manila.

Benguet and Mountain Province farmers launched a series of rallies against Ms Macapagal in 2001 and 2002 to protest the high volumes of vegetable imports, which her government had apparently cleared.

Defiance

The President responded with three official trips here to assure farmers that the government would curb future vegetable importation. But Molintas said big businesses continued to import Chinese and European vegetables, defying Ms Macapagal's directives.

Sen. Manuel Villar, who headed the Senate committee on agriculture in 2001, questioned the PPI position during a Friday press conference in Baguio City. "We should first study why we are boycotting. It is the lack of representation that endangered (our) farmers," he said.

Villar said the formidability of developed countries in the WTO can be accounted for by "very strong representation."

But Bernabe said their coalition is simply asking the government to withdraw its delegation until it is certain of the country's stand. The DA admitted in a position paper the negative impact of trade liberalization on local farms, she said.

"We are not advocating a stop to negotiations, only against the two draft agreements now being laid on the Cancun table because these will be detrimental to us and all other non-developed countries," she said. *Vincent Cabreza and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

UNIDENTIFIED BULLY

GenSan media denounce gov's guard

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The local media on Tuesday denounced a driver-bodyguard of Sarangani vice governor Felipe Constantino for bullying a Bombo Radyo reporter during a press conference held at the Sarangani provincial capitol on Monday afternoon.

Jojo Bacalanmo, reporter of dxES Bombo Radyo here, was barred from entering the venue, where provincial officials denied their alleged involvement in the P61-million fund scam hounding the capitol.

Bacalanmo told the INQUIRER that he was shoved and threatened by the still unidentified aide.

"He threatened to hit me after pushing me outside of the room. I asked the provincial employees present who was that guy but nobody wanted to reveal his identity," Bacalanmo said.

Bombo Radyo has been critical of top Sarangani officials, including Gov. Miguel Escobar, who were reportedly involved in the fund scam.

It was in Bombo Radyo where Mary Ann Gadian, an accused turned whistleblower, exposed how top provincial officials used "hocus-pocus" to facilitate the releases of public funds to 81 ghost cooperatives.

Alejandro Reblando, president of Media Association of General Santos (Mags) and correspondent for the Manila Bulletin, denounced the actuation of Constantino's bodyguard, saying it was an affront to the entire media organization.

Reblando warned that the local media would never take such an insult sitting down. Reblando urged his fellow media practitioners to come out in the open and denounce the bravado of Constantino's underling.

Rommel Rebollido, bureau chief of the Philippine News Agency (PNA) in the South Cotabato-Sarangani-General Santos (Socsargen) area, challenged Constantino to discipline his abusive minion.

"Constantino should discipline his bodyguard to prove that he is not condoning such vile attempt to gag the media. The vice governor could be held responsible for the actuation of his bodyguard," Rebollido said.

Constantino's bodyguard, Rebollido said, should be aware that he was being paid out of taxes.

"The main function of a bodyguard is to ensure the safety of his superior, not to discriminate against any member of the media," he said. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Kin of Filipina slain in Taiwan seeks GMA help

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The family of a Filipina, who was murdered in Taiwan, has asked the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo in seeking justice for their loved one.

The family of Maria Yda Mesa-Chang, 31, also wants her remains and her five-year-old daughter repatriated to the Philippines.

"Please help us. We want justice for Toto (Maria Yda)," said the victim's mother Teresita, 63. Her family resides in Alta Tierra Village in Jaro District here.

Yda was stabbed dead on Aug. 21 in her residence at 15 Alley 33, Lane 61, Taitung City, Taiwan, according to the Manila Economic Cultural Office (Meco), quoting Taiwanese police reports.

The victim, who worked as a saleslady in Manila, left for Taiwan after she married Taiwanese Chang Yong Hua in 1997. She later became a Taiwanese national.

The couple has a five-year-old daughter, Sheena (Chang His Na).

The case is being investigated by the Taitung City Police Department. The police has detained suspect Hu Shien Cho, allegedly a companion of the victim's mother in-law.

The Meco report, sent to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) office in Iloilo City, failed to mention the injuries of the victim and the motive of the killing.

According to Teresita, Yda's friends in Taiwan told her that Taiwanese TV reports said the victim suffered five stab wounds in front of the body and another five in the back.

They also told her that her son in-law was suspected of killing her daughter, she said.

Teresita said her daughter told her that she was often at odds with Hu Shien Cho because he always wanted to bring along Yda's daughter. Yda feared for her daughter's safety whenever the girl was with Hu Shien Cho, said Teresita.

LTO exec cleared of murder attempt

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—The Department of Justice has cleared a Land Transportation Office official of masterminding the attempted murder of a lawyer here last year.

The attempted murder case against Moises Almuete, LTO regional director, who was tagged as the brains of the attempted murder of lawyer Virgil Castro, was dismissed by the regional prosecutor's office in Tuguegarao City for "gross insufficient evidence."

The decision, dated July 17, said the allegation against Almuete was "hearsay, which has no probative and evidentiary value." The copy of the decision was released to reporters this week.

Assistant Regional State Prosecutor Ferdinand Dalpig, however, recommended the filing of frustrated murder case against Elmer Domingo, an LTO employee.

Castro identified Domingo as the one who attacked him on July 18 last year.

Dalpig also recommended for trial two other suspects.

The decision came before Castro, vice president of the provincial Integrated Bar of the Philippines, was again ambushed on Aug. 19 in Barangay Bintawan Sur in Villaverde town. Castro survived but three of his security aides were killed. *Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

THE GOVERNMENT is now busy listing down what benefits could be given soldiers, such as these patrolling Marawi City, following the July 27 Oakwood Mutiny. AFP

DND vows backing for troops' pay hike

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has certified as urgent a bill that Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said will increase the salaries of soldiers.

Reyes, in a statement, said he has asked the President to certify the bill.

"I told the President that there is a necessity to make corresponding changes in the salaries of the AFP for the salary standardization among teachers, policemen and soldiers," said Reyes.

Reyes said last year a law was passed granting three rounds of salary increases for policemen and teachers.

But AFP officers and men received lower salary increases, said Reyes.

"That's why I urged the President to address the problem of low pay in the military organization immediately," said Reyes.

He said the discrepancy is such that a police sergeant is getting a much higher salary than a military sergeant.

"The President is taking appropriate steps to expedite the passage of the bill seeking salary increases for soldiers," he said.

Reyes said he would take active part in the deliberations on the bill "to ensure that a reasonable and just (salary) increase for soldiers would be granted."

Support for the bill came following the July 27 mutiny at Oakwood Premier in Makati staged by the Magdalo group of soldiers.

Following that mutiny, the administration of Ms Macapagal has taken steps to show its concern for soldiers' welfare.

According to Reyes, aside from the salary increase, a housing project for soldiers will be built on a 34-hectare golf course in Fort Bonifacio.

The golf course, said Reyes, will have to give way to houses for the soldiers.

Reyes said he is ironing out the details of the housing project to benefit hundreds of AFP officers and men.

Catholics in Pampanga town seek priest's ouster

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Catholics in Minalin town are appealing to Archbishop Paciano Aniceto to remove a priest from the Sta. Monica parish after the priest allegedly molested two sacristans (altar knights), aged 15 and 17, in separate incidents in November last year.

The call for the ouster of Fr. Mark Manabat came anew after one of the boys, now 18, recently filed an affidavit of desistance on the case he filed with the Central Luzon office of the Commission on Human Rights here.

The boy on May 29 sued Manabat for rape, child abuse and sexual harassment.

Manabat has not replied to telephone calls on Saturday night. On Sunday, he agreed to a telephone interview after he celebrated Mass. By past noon, however, he sent a text message to postpone the interview, citing the need for him to first consult with Aniceto.

The demand for the removal of Manabat also came on the heels of a seeming delay in the investigation by the archdiocese of the supposed abuses.

The investigating team, led by a priest, had completed gathering the testimony of the supposed victims, including their friends to whom the details of the alleged abuses were revealed.

The parishioners also expressed concern for the safety of the boys who were seen to be living again at the convent since June despite Aniceto's order to Manabat to prohibit the members of the Knights of the Blessed Sacrament from sleeping there.

Altar boys from Manabat's previous posts in Floridablanca, Guagua and Candaba towns were reportedly allowed to stay overnight at the convent.

Even while the two boys stayed at the convent, they sent feelers for help.

The older boy, who had been abandoned by his father since birth, reported getting money from the priest.

A source at Aniceto's office confirmed the ongoing investigation of Manabat and called it a "very sensitive" one.

The source assured that the archbishop was "not sitting on the case" and was "not sweeping it under the rug." *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

DENR office stops 'desecration' of De Oro archeological site

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Environment and Management Bureau (EMB) in Northern Mindanao ordered the city government to cease its activities in the Huluga Open Site here, a certified archaeological site.

The Heritage Conservation Advocates, which has been trying to stop the construction of a multi-million-peso infrastructure project in the area, has earlier accused the city government of violating the environment compliance certificate which the EMB had issued for the project.

In its Aug. 18 order, the EMB said the city government failed to create an archaeological reconnaissance team before it started the project.

Aside from stopping the construction of the P636 million south diversion road and cargo bridge in the Huluga site, the EMB also ordered the city government to pay a P50,000 fine.

Sabdullah Abubacar, EMB director, said the order covers both sides of the site.

The construction has sparked rage among archaeologists, who view the Huluga Open Site as one of the most important finds of the century.

Several conservation groups, including the US-based Archaeological Legacy Institute (ALI), heavily criticized the "desecration."

Dr. Richard Pettigrew, president and executive Director of ALI, wrote in an e-mail " . . . we share your outrage about the destruction of Huluga."

Since the 1970s, scientists found evidence of early settlement in Cagayan de Oro City dating back to the neolithic period.

Various artifacts had been unearthed showing that Cagayan de Oro had a settlement during prehistoric times. *Grace Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Apathy dogs bid to fight rabies

DUMAGUETE CITY—Apathy is still the No. 1 impediment in the campaign against rabies in the province of Negros Oriental, according to the provincial veterinarian here.

During the midyear evaluation of the achievement of the anti-rabies campaign in the province, it was found that only 35 percent of the more than 110,000 dogs in Negros Oriental were given anti-rabies vaccines.

Quoting reports from health personnel, provincial veterinarian Antonio Mutia said three persons have died this year because of rabies and some 105 dog bites were reported since January. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Lawyers getting new lessons on ethics

DAVAO CITY—Lawyers are getting fresh lessons on ethics after a number of legal practitioners were disbarred, suspended or reprimanded each year on grounds of moral and ethical standards.

Pinky Cabreros, president of the Davao Lady Lawyers Association (Dallas), said the continuing legal education of lawyers will focus on moral ethics and has become mandatory for lawyers.

The education on moral ethics is based on a provision in a Supreme Court guideline telling lawyers what to do when they are confronted with moral questions in the practice of their profession.

Latest Supreme Court records showed that since 1989, at least 30 lawyers had been disbarred, 49 others had been suspended either indefinitely or for a period of two to 6 months, while others had been fined, reprimanded with warning, barred from appearing in court or from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines because of misconduct.

The cases ranged from failure of lawyers to deliver rentals for clients for one year; misappropriation of squatter client's money; exploitation of clients by lending them money at usurious rates of interest; falsification of documents; judicial arrogance; concubinage and forum shopping.

One case of disbarment involved a lawyer, who is a university chair.

The lawyer took advantage of one of the student's intent to pass her course and had her undergo abortion when she became pregnant.

A fiscal was disbarred after he was caught in the act of extorting money from a complainant.

A dismissed judge was disbarred for continuing his affairs with his mistress and marrying her even though he was already married.

Records also showed that some lawyers had been disbarred for resorting to dirty tricks like stealing pieces of evidence. A lawyer was fined for improper arguments. Another one was suspended for using judicial process to delay or frustrate an execution of a judgment.

Cabreros said that aside from lessons on ethical standards, lawyers were also getting updates on jurisprudence and the law.

"What they learn will serve as their guide in the practice of their profession," she said.

Dallas, a group of women in the legal profession, recently hosted this year's two-day legal education forum at the Davao Convention Trade Center. About 300 participants have participated in the convention.

Other topics in the forum were about economic research that will keep lawyers updated on technology, law on economics, legal rights, environment, pre-trial and trial schemes. *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mike, 12 others get subpoenas

From page A1

the 6th floor of Atrium Building, Makati City, "care of Mike Defensor of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council."

Lacson also asked the committee that two employees of Union Bank Branch on Perea Street, Makati—Erwin Lapuz and Ferdinand Galvez—be subpoenaed.

Senator Arroyo is set to issue the subpoena on the three.

The committee chair said all 13 witnesses were ordered to submit their evidence in three days from notice, and appear before the Senate on Tuesday. "I believe that the subpoena had been served already," he said.

Those subpoenaed were the First Gentleman himself, Victoria Toh, Kelvin Tan, Thomas Toh Jr., Jose Pidal, Tony Labrador, Nestor Ocampo Pineda (former Union Bank branch manager);

Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno; National Census and Statistics Office Administrator Carmelita Ericta and lawyer Vicente Aquino, excecutive director of the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

Also subpoenaed were branch managers of the Union Bank (Perea branch in Makati), of the International Exchange Bank (Perea branch) and of the Bank of Philippine Islands (main branch), and the president or chair of the Lualhati Foundation and of the the KGMA Foundation.

Mahusay was not included in the first batch of witnesses because his name did not appear in the initial list provided by Lacson on Monday, according to Senator Arroyo.

The committee chair furnished the Inquirer with an Aug. 25 letter from Lacson's office, which did not specifically name Mahusay, but asked that his "principal witness" be summoned to the hearing.

"The good senator also requests that his principal witness, who will be identified at the appropriate time, be called as the first witness to testify in the hearings," said the letter signed by Lacson's chief of staff Evaristo Gana.

Lacson initially withheld the name and addresses of Mahusay and his other witnesses for security reasons.

Instead, he asked Senator Arroyo that the subpoena be coursed through his office because the witnesses were in his custody at the time.

The committee chair rejected Lacson's request, saying it was against Senate rules.

He said his committee could only subpoena those people "we can find."

The apparent defection of Mahusay to the camp of the First Gentleman after his "rescue" on Tuesday forced Lacson to reveal the identities of his two other witnesses—Lapuz and Galvez.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said at a press conference that Mahusay should be summoned by the Senate.

"That will be a matter, of course, for the committee to decide. But if you will ask for my view, I believe he should be subpoenaed," said Drilon.

Should Mahusay decide to recant his original affidavit, the document is still admissible as evidence, according to Drilon.

The three-page affidavit affirmed Lacson's accusation that the First Gentleman had laundered millions of pesos by using an account under the assumed name Jose Pidal.

The affidavit also detailed other alleged illegal activities of the First Gentleman, including his private indiscretions.

"Assuming he retracts, the blue ribbon should carefully assess (the admissibility of the affidavit)," Drilon said.

Retractions unreliable

Drilon, a former justice secretary, explained that based on jurisprudence, "retractions are generally unreliable and looked upon with considerable disfavor by the court."

He advised Senator Arroyo and members of the committee to "carefully" examine the retraction and the original affidavit in light of the "circumstances" surrounding the executions of both affidavits.

"It's up to the judge, and in this case the committee chair, to assess the credibility of the original affidavit and the retraction, if one is made," he stressed.

He added: "There is no hard and fast rule. The point is it is left to the discretion and judgment of the hearing officer."

Drilon made this pronouncement after noting that the affidavit was duly signed by Mahusay, and notarized on July 21 by lawyer July Ann G. Dumlao.

Also, Mahusay publicly attested to the veracity of the contents of the affidavit in an interview with reporters on Monday.

Mahusay has apparently defected to the camp of the First Gentleman after he was "rescued" from a Tagaytay safe house by Housing chief Mike Defensor and his family on Tuesday morning.

People not stupid

At the Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said "the fact the other camp seized Mahusay is a loud and ringing confirmation of his truthfulness."

"What they did will have negative implications. But the Filipino people are not stupid," Enrile told reporters

He also joked that Jose Pidal, whom he called a mysterious spirit, had an address and could issue checks. *"Mabuti pa ang Malacañang, pa-pidal, pidal na lang."*

"But do the people still want this kind of government?" Enrile asked.

In the House of Representatives, a party-list group filed a resolution seeking to investigate the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for its failure to exercise its supervisory powers on the alleged Jose Pidal account of the First Gentleman and to stop the practice of opening secret bank accounts under fictitious names.

House Resolution No. 1290 said the policy to protect private financial transactions under the law on Secrecy of Bank Deposits of 1955 may have enabled criminal elements to launder the proceeds of their illegal activities, and tax cheats to evade the payment of taxes.

It was filed by Representatives Kim Bernardo-Lokin and Emmanuel Joel Villanueva of the Citizens Battle Against Corruption.

Lokin reminded the BSP of its declared policy of transparency and accountability in banking procedures, which was also stipulated in the General Banking Act of 2000 and the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2002. *With reports from Jerry Esplanada and Cynthia D. Balana*

Mike A sues Ping for libel

By Tarra Quismundo

AFTER the rescue of Eugenio Mahusay Jr. comes a libel suit.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo yesterday filed in the Manila City Prosecutor's Office at least 10 counts of libel against Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who lost Mahusay, the senator's principal witness against Arroyo, to the camp of the First Gentleman.

In a 27-page suit he submitted to Prosecutor Ramon Garcia, the First Gentleman also filed libel charges against Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, and Lito Banayo, Lacson's spokesperson.

"We filed at least 10 charges of libel, because we are not really sure how many times he (Lacson) may have said his lies before the media," Tricia Santos, one of Arroyo's lawyers, said.

In a statement, Arroyo's lawyer Jesus Santos (Tricia's father), said Lacson, Remulla and Banayo allegedly "published and caused the publication of defamatory remarks against the First Gentleman."

The younger Santos said the charges were based on newspaper clippings in which Lacson was quoted with his accusations against the First Gentleman.

Mahusays reunited but in different safe houses

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

ALTHOUGH Eugenio "Udong" Mahusay Jr. is reunited with his loved ones after a daring "rescue" on Tuesday, his family remains devastated.

The members of the family are now scattered in various safe houses.

Ferdinand, his sister and their mother, Aquilina, are now staying at the residence of Housing Chief Michael Defensor while Eugenio, his wife and their daughter are in another place.

"It's very difficult. We are not used to this kind of life in which our moves are restricted," Ferdinand said in Filipino.

He said that his youngest sister had to temporarily stop going to school. She is currently a sophomore college student at the New Era University.

When the Inquirerwent to the family's house in Balara, Quezon City, on Tuesday night, the neighbors said Eugenio's mother and sister were fetched by a tinted car at about noon.

Ferdinand said it was he who arranged his mother's transfer to Defensor's house.

While his mother had accepted what happened, Ferdinand said he could not help asking why this was happening to their family.

"Before we can go anywhere we want. But now a lot of things have changed," he said.

The neighborhood in Barangay Pansol in Balara, where Eugenio served as Sangguniang Kabataan chair, was surprised when he came out with his exposé against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Eugenio was the principal witness of Sen. Panfilo Lacson against Arroyo, whom the senator accused of laundering millions of pesos in campaign contributions to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Freddie Enano, a neighbor and a close friend of Ferdinand, told the Inquirer he could never believe Eugenio was able to turn his back on the First Family.

"(The President and her husband) have been very good to us (the neighborhood)," Enano, who works in Malacañang, said.

He said that when he was younger, Arroyo and his two sons Mikey and Dato would play basketball with some of their friends from the barangay every weekend.

"Ms Macapagal would even allow us to sleep in their house after our games," Enano recalled.

Enano lives on the same street where the Mahusay's house is located. The street is separated by a thick wall from the First Family's house in La Vista Subdivision in Quezon City.

Enano said the Arroyo family even built a small alley from their compound going to the neighborhood a few years back so Enano, Ferdinand and the other youngsters in the neighborhood could easily enter the compound to play basketball.

But because Eugenio was working as *sacristan* in the church of the community, he rarely joined the basketball games with the Arroyo children, according to Enano. He also said that Ferdinand was closer to the First Family than Eugenio.

Ferdinand said his brother "was manipulated by some people" against the Arroyo family.

He said Eugenio called his family on Tuesday morning to ask for help because he knew his life was in danger.

Ferdinand said his brother sought help after the witness overheard his two guards at the Milestone Hotel in Tagaytay City talking about how he would be "silenced" after his exposé.

In his narration to his family after he was "rescued," Eugenio said he was in his bed on Monday evening when one of his guards, thinking Eugenio was already asleep, said *"Pagkatapos nito, tatahimik na ito* (After this, he will fall silent)."

I told you so, Nene tells Ping on Mahusay

From page A1

speech exposing the First Gentleman's alleged illegal activities.

"I have been shown the same documents," Pimentel said. "I even talked with Eugenio Mahusay."

But he found Mahusay too gullible. "He seems easy to be intimidated and could even be bought."

Besides, the documentary evidence presented to him were not updated and uncorroborated, according to Pimentel.

Credible

But a lawyer said Mahusay appeared confident and credible when he and other lawyers cross-examined the witness last week.

"I saw no sign of hesitation, fear, or prevarication (on Eugenio Mahusay Jr.)," human rights lawyer Rene Saguisag said, apparently to belie reports that Mahusay had been coerced by Lacson's camp to testify against Arroyo.

In a statement, Saguisag said he met for the first and last time Mahusay, whom he referred to as "Onyok," on Aug. 23 in a house in Quezon City, "where the household was also present and came and went."

Saguisag, a former senator, was with other lawyers, namely, Jose Flaminiano, Artemio Tuquero, Lex Carao and Jay Flaminiano.

"All sort of questions were tossed at Onyok which he handled calmly, confidently and credibly," he said.

Even Flaminiano "seemed satisfied with (Mahusay's) demeanor and answers," Saguisag said.

The only time the witness turned emotional was when he talked about how Victoria Toh caused his removal from his employment as messenger in the office of Arroyo in Makati and its effect on the name of Mahusay, according to Saguisag.

Mahusay claimed in an affidavit he executed last month that Toh was Arroyo's personal accountant and mistress.

Saguisag said that if Mahusay was forced to be a witness, he could have easily blurted out that he was doing this against his will when he was interviewed by the media on Monday.

He also said that the mere fact that Mahusay was "seemingly abducted" by Malacañang indicated that the latter "knew too much and reminds us of some of the worse abuses of the past."

"Many are out to silence him in a proverbial sense," Saguisag said. "Let us hope no guns smoke to dispatch him to the Promise Land."

Major blunder

Pimentel recalled that this was not the first time that Lacson committed a major blunder in handling explosive accusations.

The first time, he said, also involved an allegation of corruption. It was hurled against administration Sen. Joker Arroyo.

The complainant, Rober F. Rivero, accused Arroyo of involvement in the so-called Philippine Charity Sweepstakes scam.

Rivero claimed that Arroyo was one of the administration senators whose media and publicity campaign in 2001 were financed using PCSO funds.

Pimentel was approached by Rivero, but he declined to "set off what needs to be set off" because the documents were incomplete.

Lacson said it did not matter anymore that he lost Mahusay.

"What's important is the issue of corruption and we will pursue it to the end," the senator said.

Lacson said he would deliver the second half of his exposé against the First Gentleman on Monday.

He cautioned Mahusay that he could face perjury charges if he recanted his testimony detailing his allegations against Arroyo.

"If he refuses to testify I am going to call for the notary public and the witnesses that executed the affidavit," Lacson said.

But the senator said he couldn't see how Mahusay could retract his early testimony, which he said, was a "very detailed account."

No abduction

At the LTA Building in Makati, Rommel Javier, the secretary of the First Gentleman, belied Lacson's claim the other day that he was "abducted" by members of the Presidential Security Group.

"I am still here and I report regularly for work. Anyone can come here or call me up," Javier told reporters in Filipino at a press conference.

However, he said he had a feeling he was already being watched.

"I am afraid now for myself and for my family because of the wrong accusations made by Senator Lacson. I hoped he thought about what he was going to say before mentioning any other name in this controversy," Javier said in a statement released by the office of Arroyo.

Javier also denied he was about to follow in the footsteps of Mahusay and tell all on his boss. He said that he did not know Lacson personally.

Carlos set up

In the House of Representatives, a House leader said Lacson may have been set up by businessman Alex Carlos, who provided protection to Mahusay but later handed him over to Malacañang.

The House leader from the Western Visayas noted that Carlos was the employer of Mahusay and that it was Carlos' men who provided security to Mahusay in a safe house in Tagaytay.

Carlos' name first came out in the ongoing investigation by the House committee on good government of the reported anomalous monetization of the US commodity loan program.

The congressman said Carlos could have negotiated with Malacañang for the release of Mahusay for the "right price" because Carlos had always been identified with the First Gentleman.

"I wonder why Ping (Lacson) did not know that Alex Carlos is with Mike Arroyo and why he never knew that," the source said. "*Bata yan ni* Mike Arroyo *eh.*"

He said the information provided to Lacson on the alleged bank accounts of Arroyo under a fictitious name was "A-1" information, including the returned checks of Rep. Mark Jimeneź.

But somewhere along the way, the source said, Carlos managed to negotiate with Arroyo for the release of Mahusay and left Lacson with an empty bag.

Carlos was interviewed on TV last night but his face was not shown. His wife is a councilor in Marikina City.

Carlos is also the president of North Front Shipping Service Inc., which was being investigated by the House committee on good government in connection with the sale of soybean meal and yellow corn under the US commodity loan program, also known as US Public Law 480 Title I.

It provides for government-to-government sale of agricultural commodities to developing countries under long-term credit arrangements. Repayments for agricultural commodities sold under this title may be made either in US dollars or in local currencies on credit up to 30 years.

The loan package for the Philippines is valued at $40 million, consisting of 269,000 metric tons of feed grains and 33,000 metric tons of bagged rice. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

Gov't deploys troops amid talk of Edsa IV

From page A1

justified the deployment, saying: "These are mere precautionary measures undertaken to anticipate any projected activity. It cannot be more general than that."

Like Abaya, he stopped short of saying that Estrada loyalists were those monitored as planning to mount rallies in the area. "We're still verifying that," he told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo.

But Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP, told reporters that the expected protesters were "pro-Estrada."

"We are expecting some groups to launch protests," he said. "It's an important place; we need to secure it. Just like in Makati, there is already a report that some groups have staged mass protests. We thought they might proceed to Edsa."

Asked whether Estrada supporters were among the "civilians" expected to join the mass action, Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco, Metro Manila police chief, said: "Maybe. Some of them could be from the PMAP (People's Movement Against Poverty). So far, there's none, so we don't know yet."

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said she was giving "a lot of weight" to the AFP warning that some groups were consolidating forces for another takeover attempt because "[the military] knows very well the real situation."

"It's possible that some groups would make another coup attempt, but they will not succeed," Bunye said in a briefing.

But he said the President had maintained trust and confidence in the military even if some of its junior officers called for her ouster during the July 27 mutiny at the Oakwood Premier building in Makati. He said those who joined the failed mutiny constituted a small fraction of the AFP that was remaining loyal to her command.

Recruitment

Abaya could not say if the expected mass action at the Edsa Shrine was related to the reported recruitment of civilians in Southern Tagalog and Central Visayas, specifically Samar.

"There is such a report, but apparently the recruitment is not rampant..." he said. "I don't know their intention in recruiting men. For the civilians, it could be for mass actions, but I hope they will not get any military component.

He declined to comment on speculations that battalion commanders were among those being recruited.

Asked if the expected mass action was related to another coup plot in September, as earlier disclosed by Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, Abaya said: "The information that I got was not related to the information coming from General Berroya. But it doesn't mean that there is no connection."

In his pep talk, Abaya urged the Army's 2nd ID to be vigilant against civilians visiting camps and engaging in recruitment for some cause.

"If some people come here and give some benefits even if they do not belong to the chain of command, we should start thinking about [their] motives," he said. "We should be intelligent soldiers."

Abaya also reiterated that the July 27 mutiny was "not a spontaneous airing of grievances," as claimed by the Magdalo group.

"It was a well-planned, well-organized, well-financed and well-supported undertaking to grab power," he said, noting that the plot entailed the establishment of a 15-member junta to be headed by Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan.

'No threat'

"This is troop information and education," Abaya told reporters in explaining his visit. "I have to tell them what really happened at Oakwood. Some of them do not know that there is such a big plot to overthrow the government to grab power. They thought the Magdalo group went there just to air grievances."

Deputy Director General Virtus Gil, Philippine National Police deputy chief for operations, said the military had earlier received a report that pro-Estrada groups would troop to the Edsa Shrine.

But Gil belittled the expected mass action. "I don't consider it a threat," he said, adding that the report, along with persistent rumors of another military mutiny, should not be cause for alarm.

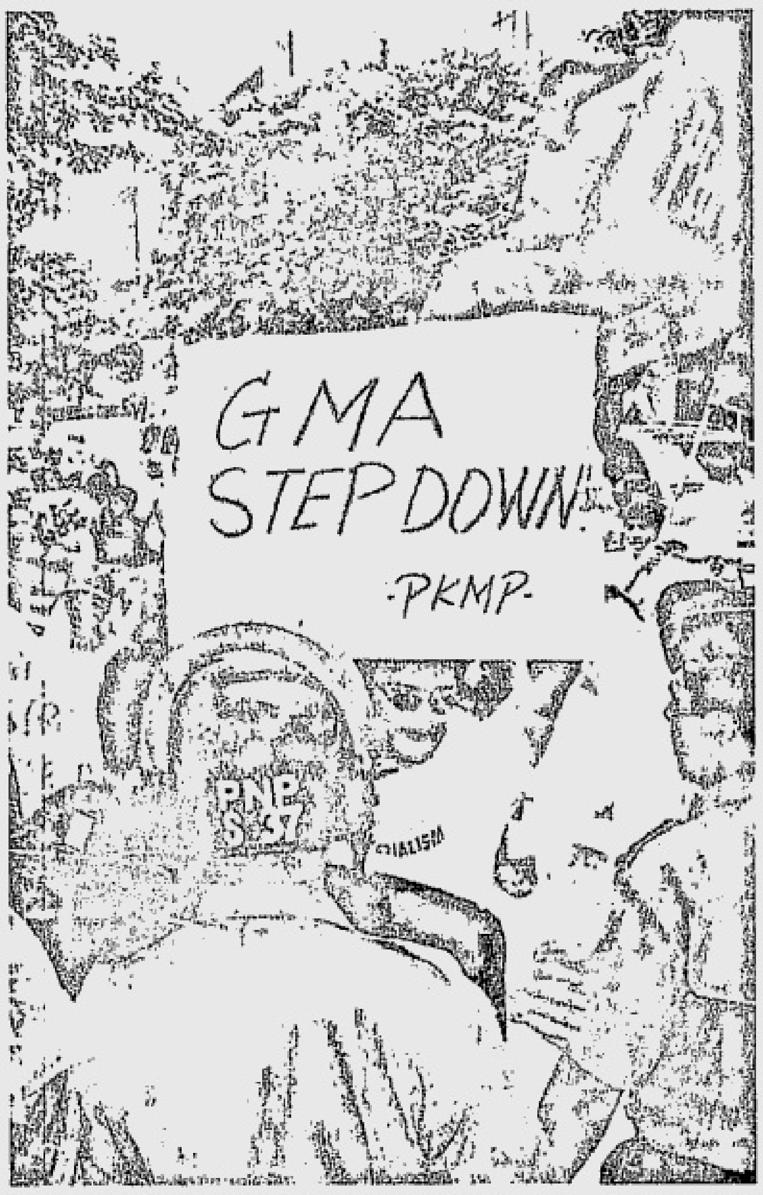
He said that during the bloody coup attempts led by Honasan against the Aquino administration, "we fought thousands of troops with helicopters and tanks, but nothing happened."

"They lost," he said.

Gil had unsolicited advice for members of the police and military planning to join another coup attempt: "This adventurism is such a disservice to the country. Every move like this sets back our development."

A PNP official, who asked not to be named, said the expected rally was part of the "script" of the political opposition in a supposed destabilization plot.

The plot purportedly began with Sen. Panfilo Lacson's exposé on the alleged corruption and womanizing of the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo. *With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., Christian V. Esguerra and Dona Z. Pazzibugan*



RIOT policemen prevent supporters of former President Estrada from staging a rally in front of the LTA Building in Makati City.

ERIK ARAZAS

Opposition can't wait for elections

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Oreta; Pwersa ng Masa president Horacio "Boy" Morales, Estrada's former agrarian reform secretary; House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla; and Rep. Didagen Dilangalen.

The opposition leaders warned against a "reemerging despotism" that, Enrile said, "might just snap the civil liberties and freedom of the people."

He said the present administration was a "despotic government," but noted that it was possible President Macapagal-Arroyo would voluntarily step down.

"I have a feeling that as an act of nobility on her part and to spare the nation of the pain inflicted by Edsa II, she would voluntarily step down. That is the test of her patriotism, nobility and love of country," Enrile said, adding:

"Why should one person who professes to serve the interests of the nation and the people insist on staying in power when she knows that the nation is totally in pain because of her?"

Tatad, chair of the Pwersa ng Masa advisory council, said there was "a clamor in the streets and elsewhere that there should be regime change." He said this was the "only worthwhile objective of the opposition."

But he clarified that he was not advocating rebellion, which he said was "an offense that is universally recognized, and under the revised penal code, as an offense against duly constituted authorities."

"We, the people, must be the one to stop this continuing rebellion against the people and the state," he said.

Later, Tatad told the INQUIRER that regime change was "not only possible [but also] necessary," and that opposition groups would "hold a series of caucuses to forge a united stand on the issue."

He said it was "now clear to the public" that Joseph Estrada was the "real president."

"The duly elected president now sits in detention at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center [in Quezon City] while the unelected pretender continues to distort his power," Tatad said.

Malacañang, however, dismissed the call for the President to step down.

"This issue [of legitimacy] has been settled," said her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

But Bunye confirmed reports that another destabilization attempt was in the offing, although he said the groups behind it would not succeed.

'State of panic'

The opposition leaders were prompted to call for the meeting with the media because "the situation has come to a certain point that we can no longer sit idly by," said Tatad, one of the 11 senators who voted against opening the second envelope of evidence at Estrada's impeachment trial.

"The nation is in great peril and because of this danger, the administration is in a state of panic," he said. "And there's nothing more dangerous for someone in panic than not knowing what to do."

He also said the "abduction" of Eugenio Mahusay, Sen. Panfilo Lacson's star witness to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo's alleged "corruption, bribe-taking and money laundering," as well as other acts of "intimidation and coercion," showed that Ms Macapagal would "do everything to silence and stop anyone who dares to stand up to her."

He listed the other acts as the early-morning arrest of Tribune editor and publisher Ninez Cacho-Olivares on charges of criminal libel, and the President's "verbal bludgeoning" of TV reporter Tina Panganiban-Perez for having interviewed Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, who was then in hiding.

According to Aquino-Oreta, "things are already getting out of hand." She called on the citizenry to "be united in seeing to it that the rights of the people should always be guarded."

Estrada-Kalaw said she was "disturbed" by recent developments.

"I believe Filipinos have been deprived of their civil liberties. There is no democracy," she said, adding that Filipinos "should stand up, all of us, to fight for our civil liberties."

'Valid suggestion'

In separate interviews, Estrada's sons Jinggoy and JV said they were backing the call for Ms Macapagal to step down.

"It's one of the more valid suggestions," considering that "she is not the legitimate president", Jinggoy said. "Her foundation is very weak, and she does not have the support of the majority of the people."

"Maybe her best bet is to stay in power until the May 2004 elections. But with the current situation, I think the regime will trip on its own [feet]," JV said.

Tatad said the situation had been "deteriorating" for Ms Macapagal. "The civil society that supposediy supported her is already meeting, and from the reports I'm getting, they're looking at [Vice President Teofisto] Guingona as her possible temporary replacement."

"So what's going to keep her in office?" Tatad said.

Estrada counsel Allan Pagula took advantage of the gathering to assail Chief Justice Hilario Davide anew for allegedly "prejudging the case" in favor of Ms Macapagal "as early as January [2001]." *With a report from Juliet L. Javellana*

Gringo shows up at DOJ, Senate

From page A1

panel led by Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera III. "I realize that the facts must be presented not in the bar of public opinion only but, more importantly, in the bar of justice."

Present at the hearing were Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño and Director Eduardo Matillano, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

After his speech, Honasan shook hands with the panel members, Calida, Matillano and the other lawyers. His face colored after shaking hands with Calida and Matillano, who had been calling on him to come out of hiding.

"My presence here also reflects my continued faith in the justice system," Honasan told the DOJ panel. "I am confident that this will be the last bastion of whatever faith I have in the system, in the rule of law, in due process and in our democracy."

He acknowledged that the accusation against him was serious, and "made more serious by the fact that I am an elected senator of the republic with a national electoral mandate."

He appealed to everyone for "sobriety, so that the accusations, trial and condemnation by publicity will stop, and we shall be allowed to present all our evidence at the proper time, in the proper court of law."

He expressed the hope that he would be accorded due process to present his side "without duress."

Deliberate delay

But Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. accused Honasan of deliberately delaying judicial proceedings in an apparent bid to "get off the hook."

In a phone interview, Lina said Honasan's very brief public appearance and his filing of a motion before the DOJ questioning its jurisdiction over the coup charge against him was "obviously a dilatory move and done in bad faith."

He said Honasan should have raised the question from the start, meaning Aug. 18, the first deadline for him to submit his reply.

"Why only now after having been given an extension of 10 days within which to file his counter-affidavit?" Lina said.

But Malacañang expressed satisfaction that Honasan had finally surfaced to face the coup d'etat charge.

Ignacio Bunye, spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, reiterated Malacañang's assurance that Honasan would not be arrested until the case was filed in court and a warrant issued against him.

"The President has said that Senator Honasan would be accorded due process, and based on the procedures that are currently in force, I don't think there is room for an arrest at this time," he said.

Bunye said it was up to the DOJ to deal with Honasan's supposed position that the case against him be filed before the Ombudsman.

Fiesta

At the Senate, the man accused by the government of masterminding a plot to overthrow duly constituted authorities was received with open arms.

A fiesta-like atmosphere descended on the session hall when Honasan entered at about 3 p.m. and was instantly surrounded by his fellow senators, reporters and TV crews, guests and other Senate employees.

Senate President Franklin Drilon had to delay the start of the session to give everyone a chance to talk.

In an extemporaneous speech later, Honasan expressed thanks for the "unwarranted attention."

He said he had heeded the call of the public, friends and fellow senators to surface and refute the coup charge against him, and reiterated dismay at the charge "prematurely leveled" and his supposed trial and condemnation "by publicity."

He also said his continued accessibility would "depend on the next chapter of this running episode that we must all bring to public attention"—an apparent reference to his protest against the government's "piecemeal" release of evidence against him.

"I am willing to refute charges within the system," Honasan said.

"But beyond that, inside or outside the chamber, being inaccessible or accessible in the performance of duties or perceived to be otherwise, this representation will continue to perform his duties to the best of his ability within the system, within the law, peacefully and legally," he said, adding that this was his "commitment" to his colleagues.

At the start of the session, Pimentel led the prayer and acknowledged Honasan's presence.

He said Honasan's return to the chamber proved that the latter wanted "to uphold the rule of law and search for the truth."

Peso rate

Other senators from both sides of the political fence welcomed Honasan's appearance.

"That is a welcome sign of a return to normalcy," said Sen. John Osmeña. "I hope the peso rate will correspondingly adjust with Honasan back in the Senate. The exchange rate should go down."

Said Sen. Edgardo Angara: "This is very good. This shows that he is not afraid because he has nothing to be afraid of, in the first place."

For Sen. Manuel Villar, Honasan's return would "give him a chance to explain his side, and charges will now be properly answered."

"It's a welcome sign. We welcome him with open arms because he is part and parcel of this institution," said Sen. Robert Barbers.

HONASAN at DOJ ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

But Interior Secretary Lina said Honasan's legal maneuver betrayed his real intention, which was allegedly to delay the judicial process of ascertaining the truth behind his supposed involvement in the failed mutiny.

He reiterated his challenge for the senator to undergo an "armpit test" to prove his innocence.

What Lina meant was for Honasan to present his left arm to the people to prove that he did not take part in the "blood compact" with the renegade soldiers, as earlier alleged by Army Maj. Perfecto Ragil, one of the government witnesses against the mutineers.

Lina also said Honasan should also stop hiding to quell speculations that he was undergoing surgery to remove the blood compact scar near his left armpit.

When asked by reporters at the DOJ about the alleged blood compact, Honasan said he would answer this question in the proper forum.

At the DOJ hearing, Honasan counsel Gutierrez said it was the Office of the Ombudsman that should conduct a preliminary investigation on the charge against his client.

"There is no indication that the panel of prosecutors of the [DOJ] has been authorized by law to conduct the preliminary investigation. Neither has it been demonstrated that the panel has been designated by the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct a preliminary investigation," he said.

Gutierrez even noted an INQUIRER report quoting acting Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio Jr. as saying that the Ombudsman should handle the case.

He clarified that his motion was not a motion to dismiss "on the ground of lack of jurisdiction, nor is it a motion for suspension of proceedings due to the existence of a prejudicial question."

"Having raised this issue and filed this motion, Senator Honasan is not waiving his right to submit counter-affidavits and supporting evidence prior to a preliminary investigation," the lawyer said. "He is willing and able to do so at such time when the pending jurisdictional issue is finally resolved."

Gutierrez's motion was adopted by the lawyers of Honasan's co-accused—Capt. Felix Turingan, Honasan's staff member George Duldulao, retired Col. Ernesto Macahiya of Bay, Laguna, a Colonel Briones, a retired Colonel Lazo, one Lina Reyes, and 1,000 John and Jane Does, most of them members of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc., the faction of the Guardians that Honasan leads.

Matillano said he would oppose Honasan's motion. The DOJ panel gave him up to Monday to submit his opposition.

Leap of faith

In an interview before the Senate session started, Honasan said he did not seek any assurance from the government that he would be exonerated later from the coup d'etat charge.

"This is proof that I'm in good faith," he said. "This is just a leap of faith on my part."

He said he had voluntarily surfaced and agreed to be "under the system" because of the clamor from various sectors and his fellow senators.

He also said the only guarantee he had received from the Macapagal administration was that there would be no warrantless arrest, and that he would have a fair hearing. *With reports from Christine Avendaño, Nelson F Flores and Juliet L. Javellana*

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3:20-3:50 pm	Making the Lead from Autocad to Autodesk Inventor Series by: CIM Technologies
3:55-4:25 pm	CP & N - Profiltec
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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Solon treats 60 barangay chiefs to Hong Kong trip

By Tarra Quismundo

ANGPING

ATIENZA

MANILA 3rd District Rep. Harry Angpin's generosity has put 60 barangay chairmen in hot water.

The barangay chiefs are now facing a probe for going on a three-day trip to Hong Kong and China without seeking permission from City Hall.

Worse, the local officials from the Blumentritt and Divisoria areas reportedly even tried to conceal the trip by signing a waiver declaring they were not public officers.

However, Angpin, who spent around P600,000 to sponsor the trip, defended the chairmen.

The congressman said he initiated the "educational trip" so the barangay officials could see how progressive Hong Kong and Shenzen, China, were.

He stressed that no public funds were used since he, a brother and other family members paid for the entire thing.

Angpin told the INQUIRER that he spent $140 for each of the 60 barangay chairmen's plane fare, hotel accommodations, and other expenses or a total of $8,400 (P462,000 at P55 per dollar).

He said he also gave each of them P3,000 "token" shopping money or a total of P180,000.

Manila Barangay Bureau Director Norberto Enriquez said they were investigating the issue.

Enriquez explained that Manila public officials or city hall employees must first secure an "authority to travel" from the Mayor's Office before they could go out of the country.

No authorization was sought and none was given, he said.

"We interviewed one chairman who told us that they even signed a waiver declaring that they were not public officials," Enriquez related.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said, "I don't see anything wrong with chairmen observing major city developments, but they have to secure travel permits."

In a phone interview, Angping admitted that he might have "overlooked" some procedures due to time constraints.

"We took advantage of the travel packages, which we would have missed if we took the time to get the travel papers," Angping said.

He, also expressed doubts whether Atienza, who is from the Liberal Party, would have granted the permits. Angping is from the National People's Coalition.

"But I will rectify whatever I may have overlooked. I am willing to face the consequences, even if I have to go to jail," said Angping. "I don't think it is such a big crime."

He added that the travel was worth the "investment."

Enriquez said the barangay chairmen may face charges of travelling without authorization and falsification of public documents.

Sultans tapped to improve peace in Mindanao

PEACE and order are royal affairs.

Yesterday, some 100 sultans from Mindanao met at the Manila Hotel's Centennial Hall for the First Conference of Royal Sultanates on Unified and Effective Governance.

It was the first time royalties gathered to talk about governance.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who was introduced as a sultan, welcomed the participants, most of them clad in colorfully beaded yellow attire, to the event.

He cited Manila's roots which traces back to Rajah Sulayman and Rajah Matanda.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, United States Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong, Gov. Parouk Hussin of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao; Sultan Topaan Disomimba, chair of the Royal Houses of Lanao, among others, attended the opening of the conference.

The day-long conference sought to tap the sultans in improving the peace and order situation in Mindanao.

"Sultans have authority over the community. People believe more in them than, say, barangay officials," said Laxaman Bangcola, Sultan of Sawir in Masiu, Lanao del Sur.

Sultans are traditional community leaders in Mindanao who inherit their title from their clan.

Ms Macapagal-Arroyo called the Sultans "temporal and spiritual leaders with whom Muslims continue to identify themselves with as a matter of tradition."

Tarra Quismundo

FLOWERS OF EDSA
The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority has adorned the center island of Edsa with plants to make the highway more pleasing to the eyes.
RUDY ESPERAS

After Makati, robbers strike in Global City

By Alcuin Papa

A DAY after heavily armed men robbed the Citibank cash department at the Citibank Center at the Makati Central Business District, gunmen with high-powered firearms killed a woman during an attempted robbery inside the Global City of Fort Bonifacio in Taguig.

According to Insp. Cleto Seriosa, chief of the Taguig police Criminal Investigation Unit, four employees of the Esquire Loading Company left their office in Urdaneta Village, Makati City, Tuesday night to deliver an undetermined amount of cash to their office in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

The four: Maribeth Bernaldez, Pedro De Venecia Lingco, and Indians Ravi Ashok Uttamchandi and Pawan Mattani were aboard a blue Toyota Altis (XCB 675).

At 9:45 p.m., while they were driving along 2nd Avenue near the Padre Burgos Circle, a white unmarked van blocked their path.

Four men brandishing high-powered firearms immediately jumped out of the van and announced a holdup.

However, Ravi, who was driving the car, stepped on the gas in a bid to drive away. This prompted the suspects to shoot.

All four occupants of the Altis were reportedly hit. But despite a gunshot wound, Ravi managed to drive to the Chowking restaurant at the corner of 31st Street and Rizal Drive.

Seeing the crowd at the restaurant, the suspects fled.

Ravi then drove to the Philippine Army Hospital where Bernaldez died while undergoing treatment.

The other victims were later transferred to the Makati Medical Center.

Seriosa said they were coordinating with the Makati police to determine if the suspects were the same group that robbed the Citibank on Monday.

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METROBRIEFS

Fetus found in UP toilet

A FEMALE fetus was found yesterday afternoon inside the second floor toilet of the chemistry building at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. Police said the fetus, which is between six to nine months old, was discovered by janitress Virginia Zamora at 3:15 p.m. while cleaning the toilet. She immediately informed her coworkers who then called the police for assistance. Police suspect the fetus could have been left either by a student or a staff of the state university. *Tina Santos*

Dawn fire in San Juan

FIREMEN struggled for three hours before finally putting out a huge fire which gutted five houses in San Juan at dawn yesterday. Authorities said two men suffered second degree burns. They were identified as Rene Gabas, 42, and Reynaldo Martin, 60. Authorities said the fire started around 3 a.m. at the house of a Carmen Arriola on M.H. del Pilar Street in Barangay Magtunas. Its cause is still being determined. *Luige del Puerto*

Concert for streetchildren

SOME 500 streetchildren from Metro Manila will be treated to a special day of sports and games on Sept. 6 at the Celebrity Sports Plaza from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Called "Tanging Araw," the activity is part of the First Street Children NGOs-Business Sector-Entertainment Artists Campaign Against Illegal Drugs organized by Actualizer Events Management and sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, with the participation of the Quezon City Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Highlight of the activity is the pledging rites of 10 of the country's top business companies, which will each donate P10,000 a month for six months to support the food needs of 10 streetchildren drop-in centers in Metro Manila.

Dr. Eduardo Sipin, 53

DR. EDUARDO Sipin has joined his creator last Aug. 21. He was 53. Dr. Sipin, a board topnotcher in the optometrist licensure exam and former president of the Samahan ng mga Optimetrists sa Pilipinas, is survived by his wife, Dr. Cora; children Tin-tin, Edward, Sofia and Caroline; grandson Miggy; mother Rafaelita; brothers and sisters Mabel, Tessa, Sonny Boy, Cleo, Marissa, Ching, Pilita, Loreto, Tina and Beth. His body lies in state at St. Peter's Chapel, Quezon City. Interment is on Aug. 31, at 2 p.m. at the North Cemetery.

Shabu lab found in Makati apartel

PDEA Undersecretary Anselmo Avenido (left) questions suspected pusher Richard Lim (center) after his arrest during a raid of his apartment unit in Oakwood Mansions in Makati Wednesday. ERIK ARAZAS

By Margaux Ortiz

AUTHORITIES raided a suspected shabu laboratory yesterday in Makati City.

The "mini" shabu laboratory, located in Apartment Q, 4938 Oakwood Apartments, Enriquez Street, Palanan, Makati, belonged to Richard Vincent Lim.

The raid was conducted by operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in cooperation with the Makati City police.

According to PDEA chief Anselmo Avenido Jr., the agency acted on tips of neighbors regarding Lim's suspicious activities.

A special team led by Director Marino Ravelo of the PDEA put the area under surveillance for a few days before applying for a search warrant last Monday.

At around 8 a.m. yesterday, the team raided the air-conditioned apartment and found Lim under the influence of illegal drugs, Avenido said.

After searching the place, Ravelo's team found suspected drug chemicals in powder and liquid form, Avenido said.

The PDEA chief added that several drug paraphernalia like flasks, beakers and tubes were also found in the house.

Also recovered from the apartment was a taped grenade and P6,000 worth of suspected shabu, Avenido said.

Avenido said Lim, a Chinese-Filipino who has lived in the said apartment for three years, will be charged with possession of illegal drugs.

"If proven that he is indeed behind this backyard laboratory, Lim will also be charged with manufacturing of illegal drugs," Avenido stressed.

Ravelo, on the other hand, said the suspect regularly goes out at night and returns home at around 5 a.m.

Ravelo added that according to the suspect's "right hand," Benjamin Mendiola, Lim delivers illegal substances to night clubs.

The suspect, who admitted he was a drug user, denied that he was behind the mini-laboratory.

Lim, 35, said he was a Marketing graduate from San Beda College.

He said he lived alone in his apartment, and would not contact any of his family members for assistance. Lim said both his parents are abroad.

Security around Manila banks boosted

By Leila B. Salaverria

SECURITY around banks in Manila has been beefed up following President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for intensified operations against bank robbery syndicates.

Western Police District Director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong yesterday said he had ordered the motorcycle units, the mobile patrols and detectives to be extra vigilant around banks.

He said that even if Manila has been spared from the recent spate of bank robberies, he does not want to take any chances.

"Knock on wood," Bulaong said when asked if there have been reports indicating that there might be bank robberies in the country's capital

The last bank robbery reported in Manila took place in July 2001, where eight armed men stormed the BPI Sta. Mesa Branch and ran off with P400,000.

Last Monday, 15 men stormed the heavily guarded Citibank Center on Paseo de Roxas in Makati's Central Business District shortly after the bank had closed.

Monday's robbery is the fourth this year in Southern Metro Manila.

In April, around P2 million was lost when 30 armed men robbed the Equitable-PCIBank in Makati. Before that, heavily armed men also robbed two banks in Parañaque. The said heists were over in minutes, police said.

Ms Macagapagal has said that more police visibility and intelligence work were needed to contain bank heists.

Police have also appealed to bank managements to cooperate with investigators who are probing the robberies.

Teenager saved by mom from prostitution den

A 16-YEAR-OLD girl has been rescued from an alleged prostitution den in Manila with the help of her mother, who was made to believe her daughter was working as a dishwasher.

The victim was taken from the May Jing Beerhouse along M. Dela Fuente St. in Sampaloc, Manila, on Tuesday night by members of the Western Police District's Women's desk and the Special Operations Group.

Investigation showed that the victim had run away from home in Tondo on Aug. 8 fearing a scolding from her mother for staying out late the night before with a friend identified as Norlyn.

Norlyn had told the mother that her daughter had been employed as a dishwasher in Rizal. But the girl's real job was discovered when her younger brother followed Norlyn to the beerhouse.

The mother immediately went to check and saw her daughter there. She then asked for police help in rescuing her daughter.

Leila Salaverria

Ping's evil deeds exposed on TV

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I'M NOT used to plugging my show on radio and television, but I invite you to watch the special episode of "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" on Saturday, at RPN 9 from 6 to 7 p.m.

The show will veer away from its usual format. Instead of featuring complaints the program receives from simple citizens, I will be the one to make a complaint. Against Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

The show is entitled "Sumbong ni Mon Tulfo sa taongbayan tungkol kay Ping Lacson (Tulfo's report to the people about Ping Lacson)".

* * *

The show will focus on the confessions of Francisco "Kit" Mateo, a former hit man of Ping Lacson when he was still in the defunct Philippine Constabulary.

Mateo knew he was dying of cancer and asked ABS-CBN to interview him so he could make his confessions public. He died two or three weeks later.

For reasons only ABS-CBN knew, Mateo's confessions were never aired on TV or radio.

* * *

I won't speculate on why the country's biggest radio-TV network never came out with that interview which is very damaging to Ping Lacson.

I was able to get hold of a copy of the interview. I thank ABS-CBN for giving me permission to air it on my show on Saturday.

I promise to give the network due credit during the show's airing.

* * *

But let me give you a sidelight of that interview.

Ana Marie Fuderanan, the ABS-CBN reporter who made that interview with Mateo, is in hiding.

Lacson and his henchmen have been harassing her since she made that interview.

Lacson even claimed she was given a new car by jueteng lord Bong Pineda. The truth is she was able to buy the car because of a loan she got from the ABS-CBN Employees Union.

* * *

What did Mateo say in that interview?

He detailed all the assassinations he and his fellow hit men made on orders from their superior, Ping Lacson.

For example, Mateo said Lacson ordered him to kill Capt. Jimmy Victorino, chief of the theft and robbery section of the Western Police District (WPD) in 1986.

Another killing that Lacson's henchmen made upon his orders was pushing out of a flying helicopter a woman in her 30s and an eight-year-old girl. The victims' only sin was that they were the sister and niece of Joey de Leon, leader of the notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang, Red Scorpion Group.

* * *

I had that helicopter scene dramatized, hewing closely to Mateo's confessions.

The talents that my program got to play the roles Kit Mateo, other hit men, and the murder victims couldn't help shedding tears over the fate of the child.

"Bakit pa dinamay niya yung bata (Why did he have to involve the child)?" said the talent who played Joey de Leon's sister, her eyes moist.

If you want to know more about what Kit Mateo said in that interview then I invite you to watch my show on Saturday.

* * *

Policemen who respond to reports of trouble created by fellow cops will not likely arrest the troublemakers.

Police Officers Ranulfo Estarija, Raymundo Binbinon and Dante Cabilangan were sent to Barangay Pulong Duhat, Malabon, after residents in the area reported that some drunken cops were firing their guns indiscriminately.

The cops took time to arrive at the scene. When they finally arrived, some of the cops who threw the whole place in panic had already left. Two of the cop-troublemakers were still in the area, but they were not taken to the precinct by the responding cops. The responding cops even gave them "high fives."

Now, who can the citizens turn to?

* * *

Yes, who can law-abiding citizens turn to when they get oppressed by abusive cops?

Definitely, they can't depend on the Internal Affairs Service (IAS) of the Philippine National Police. IAS was created by Congress to receive complaints from aggrieved citizens.

Definitely, they can't run to the People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB), which is supposed to hear cases against erring cops.

Those two bodies are useless.

* * *

IAS and PLEB are paper tigers to abusive cops.

The Internal Affairs Service can only recommend but not dismiss cops found guilty of abusive behavior.

PLEB, has not been doing its job as envisioned by Olongapo City Rep. Kate Gordon who authored the law creating it. Have you heard of an abusive cop being fired by PLEB lately?

* * *

If President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to earn the love and respect of the small people, she should strengthen the mechanisms for disciplining erring policemen.

It's the small people that get oppressed by abusive cops because they can't hire lawyers to prosecute their tormentors.

The President should listen to the cries of plain citizens for justice from the oppression of abusive policemen.

I know how plain folks feel about the injustice they suffer at the hands of corrupt and abusive cops through my public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo."

I myself feel desperate. Most of the complaints from simple folks that I refer to government disciplining bodies take time to resolve or are not acted upon.

Fake CDs seized in Malabon

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

ABOUT 11,000 pieces of pirated CDs, VCDs and DVDs were discovered inside a two-story house in an exclusive subdivision in Malabon City.

Through a search warrant issued by Malabon City Regional Trial Court Judge Rosa Reyes, Malabon City policemen stormed a two-story house at Block 15, Lot 2, White Lily St., Victoneta North, Araneta Village in Barangay Potrero early Tuesday morning.

The police found 11 boxes of pirated CDs and VCDs inside the house, reportedly owned by Jack Tan and Jimmy Tan, both Taiwanese nationals. Each box had 1,000 pieces of fake videos.

The raid came after an informer confirmed the two Taiwanese were involved in trading fake CDs, VCDs and DVDs. The two suspects eluded arrest.

The other day, the Caloocan City Police confiscated more than 2,000 pirated CDs, VCDs and DVDs from vendors in the LRT Northmall in Rizal Avenue Extension, Caloocan City.

The policemen swept the area about 4 p.m. Tuesday and seized 2,422 pieces of fake videos from the various stalls.

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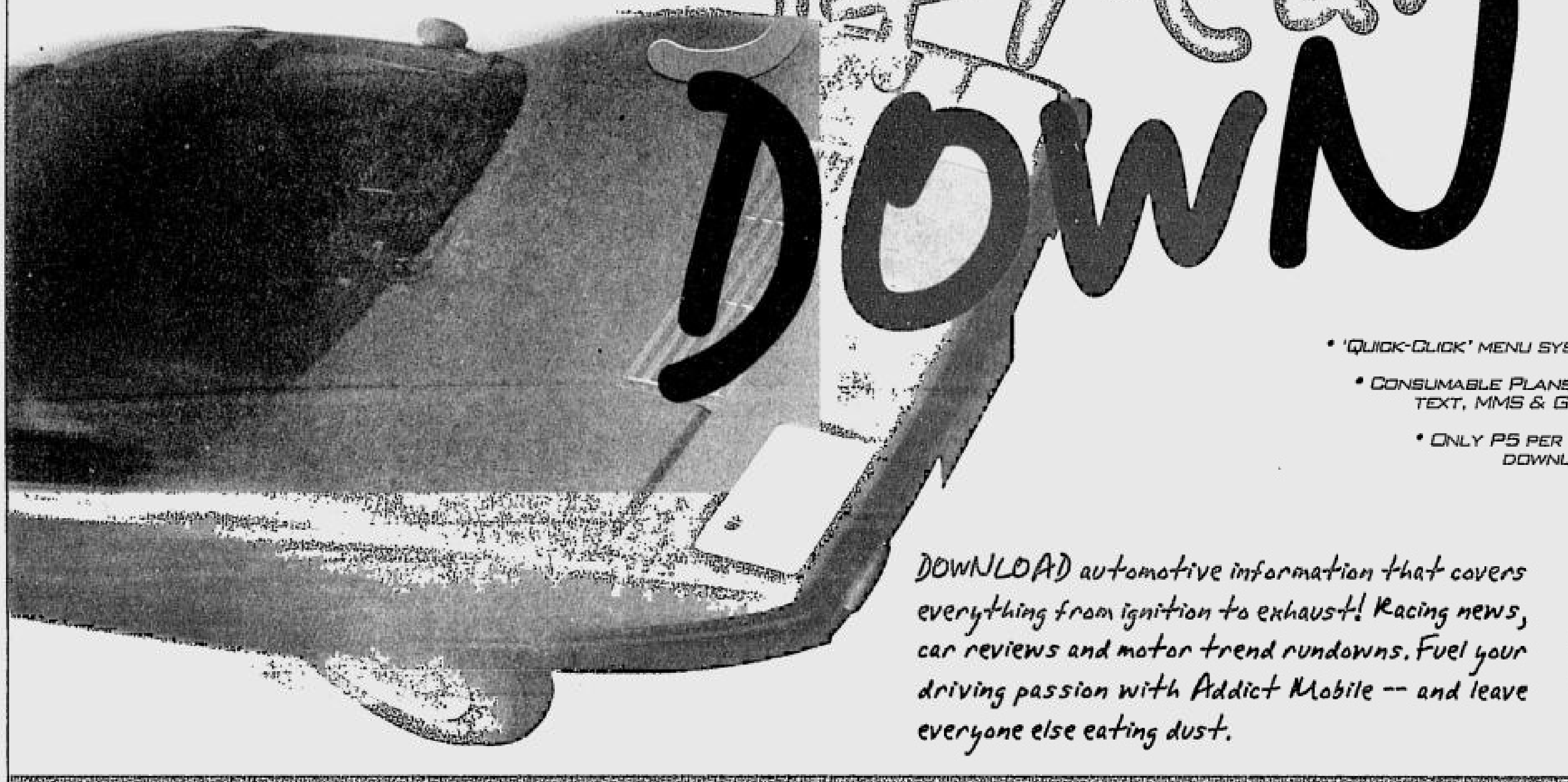

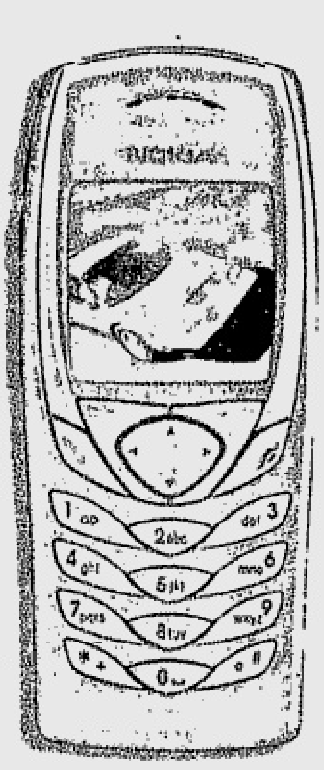

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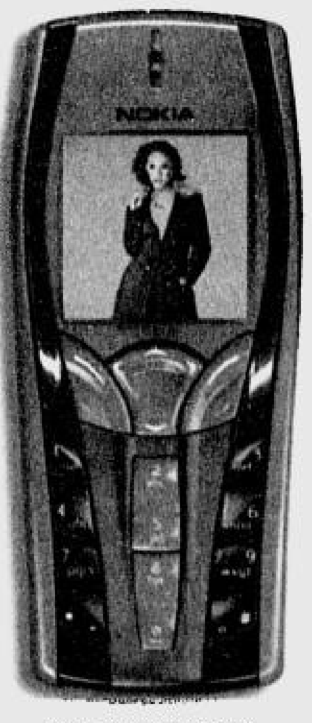

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PSC LUXURY VEHICLES

Puentevella asks COA to conduct lifestyle check

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE CHAIR of the House committee on youth and sports yesterday formally requested the Commission on Audit to conduct a lifestyle check on officials of the Philippine Sports Commission, even as two top agency honchos came out in the open to clear their name.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella said he recommended to COA Chair Guillermo Carague to hold the inquiry through its special audit committee and asked that its findings be submitted directly to his House panel.

Yesterday, PSC executive director Ed Mateo and Rizal Memorial Sports Complex administrator Ramon Suzara admitted they are on the list of eight key PSC officials who were asked last June to submit their statement of assets and liabilities.

Both Mateo and Suzara welcomed Puentevella's recommendation—based on what the two termed as "blind items" raised by Inquirer columnist Recah Trinidad—but insisted they have nothing to hide.

Mateo, who has been with the government sports agency since its creation in 1990, said he bought his 1995 Mitsubishi Pajero at an auction in Subic with part of the back wages he had received from the PSC.

Mateo had sued the PSC two years ago for illegal termination. He won the case, was re-installed in his post as PSC assistant executive director and awarded an undisclosed amount in settlement, including P1.4 million in back wages. He was later promoted to executive director.

His blue two-door Pajero is among the luxury vehicles regularly parked in the exclusive PSC parking lot at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex—the subject of Trinidad's Bare Eye column.

"I'm open to any lifestyle check because I know that the issue will pass," said Mateo, who joined the agency as a budget officer during his 16-year tenure with the Department of Budget and Management.

Suzara said he regularly declares his assets and liabilities as a government employee but admitted to having other sources of income.

"The pay in the PSC won't be enough (to sustain my lifestyle)," said Suzara, who is also a jury president of the International Volleyball Association, among other side jobs. "But I have a clear conscience and I have nothing to fear."

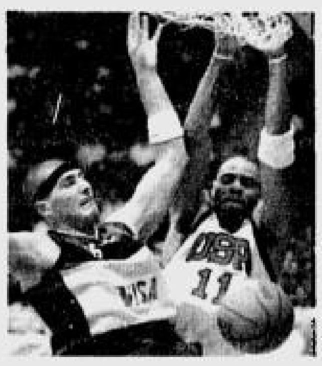
Suzara, who also teaches at the De La Salle University, said he owns a modest house in Bahayang Pag-asa, a low-cost subdivision in Molino, Bacoor, Cavite.

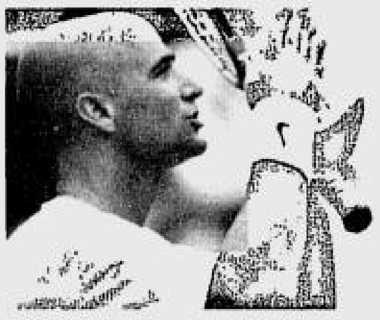
Both Mateo and Suzara, two of the closest aides of PSC chair Eric Buhain, said the lifestyle check is a "non-issue" and vowed to continue working.

Earlier, Buhain said the COA had requested that he and seven of his immediate staff submit their statements of assets and liabilities. He said the COA had not come up with its findings.

THE PSC parking lot in front of the Rizal Memorial Administration Building.
ERIK ARAZAS

WHAT'S INSIDE





■ US 5 gets back at Argentines /A20
■ FedEx ships out import /A20
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■ Badminton top guns reach q'finals /A21

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MARIJUANA USE

FedEx ships out import

By June Navarro

TRACES of marijuana have been found in the urine sample of import Darryn Hancock, forcing the FedEx Express management to ship out the NBA veteran in favor of Terrence Shannon, a three-point shooting king in the United States Basketball League.

But it is still uncertain whether Shannon can suit up for the Express in time for its PBA Reinforced Conference opener against Red Bull Barako in Baguio City on Saturday.

Listed as 6-foot-7 on US basketball rosters and 6-foot-8 in Europe, Shannon is expected to face a stern PBA medical panel when he is measured any time before gametime. The league maintains a 6-foot-5 height limit requirement for imports.

The PBA entourage has already motored to the City of Pines to arrange the opening ceremonies of the season-ending conference, and chances are the 22-year-old Shannon will be measured by the panel on game day itself.

"We're not sure if he (Shannon) can make the grade. But we're keeping our hopes that he would pass the measurement," said FedEx coach Derrick Pumaren.

Should Shannon, the USBL's Most Valuable Player last season, flunk the test, the Express would play without an import against the Thunder. The Express are pressed for time to look for a second replacement.

The Express ruled out Hancock, picked 38th overall by the Charlotte Hornets during 1994 NBA season, after traces of marijuana were found in his urine sample following a mandatory drug test ordered by the Games and Amusements Board.

The Hornets drafted the 6-foot-5 Hancock along with former Red Bull import Antonio Lang and Voshon Lenard, who is still making waves in the NBA.

But despite Hancock's NBA experience, an INQUIRER source said the Express were determined to send the import back to the United States.

The source said Hancock has the skills but lacks the endurance to play a 48-minute game required of imports.

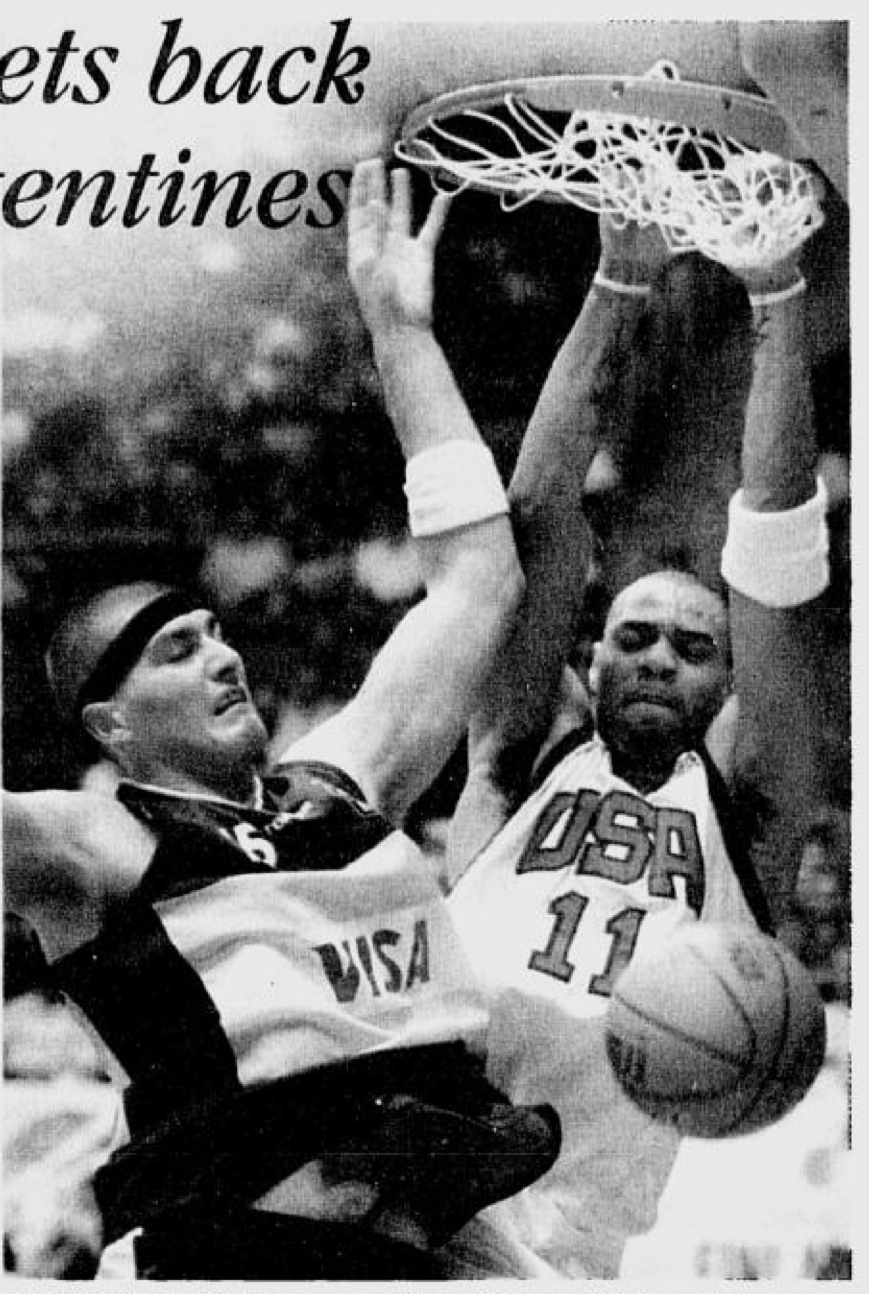
The GAB requires a drug test on all professional athletes, including PBA imports, before they can secure a playing license.

Saturday's inaugural will mark the first time in the league's 29-year history that it will open a conference outside Metro Manila.

NBN-IBC will hook up with stations in Cebu City and Metro Manila in a festive presentation an hour before game time.

The Reinforced Conference, returning to the PBA calendar after an absence of 14 years, had long been a venue for momentous events. The last time it was held in 1989, San Miguel Beer, mentored by Norman Black, won to complete the third Grand Slam in PBA history.

US 5 gets back at Argentines


KENYON Martin (11) dunks against Ruben Wolkowyski of Argentina. AP

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Argentina couldn't pull off the same type of shocker it did a year ago.

With an improved United States team showing greater degrees of poise and talent down the stretch, the Americans avenged a groundbreaking defeat of a year ago by defeating Argentina 94-86 Tuesday in the second round of the Tournament of the Americas.

Fittingly for the United States, the star of the game was Jermaine O'Neal—one of only two U.S. players held over from last summer's team that finished a disappointing sixth at the World Championships.

O'Neal scored 22 points and made one of the biggest plays of the game at the defensive end, blocking a shot by Fabricio Oberto with 1:13 left—a play that led to a fast-break dunk by Vince Carter off a pass from Allen Iverson for an 89-83 lead. It was the only missed shot for Oberto, who finished 8-for-9.

Meanwhile, Tracy McGrady sat out the US team's game against Argentina because of a back injury and said he likely would not play in the remainder of the Olympic qualifying tournament. *AP*

Eagles gun for top spot

STANDINGS	W	L
Ateneo	8	2
FEU	8	2
UE	6	3
La Salle	6	3
Adamson	5	5
UST	3	6
UP	1	8
NU	1	9

GAMES TODAY (Araneta Coliseum)
11 a.m.—Ateneo vs NU (jrs)
1:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs NU (srs)
4 p.m.—UP vs DLSU (srs)
6 p.m.—UPIS vs DLSZ (jrs)

DEFENDING champion Ateneo De Manila University tries to move closer to a Final Four seat when it takes on National University today in the UAAP basketball tournament at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Blue Eagles also hope to grab the solo lead against the Bulldogs at 1:30 p.m. after beating and tying the FEU Tamaraws on top of the standings at 8-2.

Wesley Gonzales, Larry Fonacier, LA Tenorio and JC Intal proved instrumental during the Eagles' 87-63 conquest of the Tamaraws for their eight straight victory after starting with a 0-2 record.

Getting a ninth consecutive win over the Bulldogs today and beating the University of the Philippines' Fighting Maroons on Sunday will guarantee the Eagles a return trip to the Final Four.

Doing it won't be easy though as the Bulldogs and the Fighting Maroons have the tendency to play the spoilers' role as both schools are on the edge of early elimination.

The Bulldogs won their opening match against the Maroons only to drop their next nine games that virtually put them out of the running for a semifinal slot.

Meanwhile, the UAAP (University Athletic Association of the Philippines) has discouraged players from tapping each other's nape, a gesture which caused tension between the Ateneo Blue Eagles and the Adamson Falcons during their match almost a week ago.

Tension flared up when Ateneo's Wesley Gonzales tapped Mark Abadia of Adamson on the nape after the Eagles' 69-55 victory over the Falcons at the Blue Eagle Gym on Aug. 21.

Slighted by Gonzales' action, Abadia reacted roughly as animosity enveloped both teams, almost triggering a melee until cooler heads intervened.

As a result, Gonzales and Abadia were reprimanded by their respective schools for their unsportsmanlike conduct as decided upon by the UAAP board. *June Navarro*

Cardinals edge Lions; Knights gain

By June Navarro

RAYMOND Dula and Sean Co pieced together a pair of sterling performances as Mapua squeaked past San Beda, 64-63, yesterday in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal.

Dula grabbed a career-high 23 rebounds and banged in 11 points while Co, a rookie from Chiang Kai Shek High School, topscored for the Cardinals with 14 points while putting the cuffs on San Beda hotshot Ronnie Bughao.

The Cardinals picked up their seventh win in 11 games and moved into a tie for third place with the idle Jose Rizal Heavy Bombers.

The Red Lions had a chance to avert their fourth straight loss but Mark Apepe's triple was way off the mark and Arjun Cordero's follow-up hit the front rim as time expired.

Ronjay Enrile erupted for 36 points on top of nine rebounds and nine assists as the Letran Knights outlasted the PCU Dolphins in overtime, 94-90, in the other senior match.

In notching their eighth victory in 12 games, the Knights thus grabbed a share of the lead with the San Sebastian College Stags. The Dolphins absorbed their fifth straight setback in the second round and fell to 3-9.

Mariano perfect in ruling UAE blitz chess

INTERNATIONAL Master Nelson Mariano II of the Philippines scored a perfect 9 points in nine games to rule the recent 2003 Arab Invitational Blitz Chess Championship in the United Arab Emirates.

In achieving the rare result, the 28-year-old Mariano, an enlisted man in the Philippine Army who placed third in the 1994 world junior chess championship in Brazil, beat Egyptian IM Abdulhamid Arosi with black in a Center Counter Game and UAE's Nabilk Saleh with white in a King's Pawn Opening in his last two rounds.

Arosi went on to finish second with 7.5 points, followed by Fide Master Mohd Amer of Syria with 7. *With a report fromNM Marlon Bernardino*

Picking 'Powerpacked' Pacquiao

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I SAW Marco Antonio Barrera fight on a day that I had always looked forward to as a day to just laze around— Sunday.

I had just done that. And I got rewarded. In fact, I got more than I had bargained for.

On Sunday, I watched Barrera with an eagle eye. Jotted down notes. Dissected every move that he made—from his penchant to move from right to left. Circling his opponent like an unstoppable carousel. Throwing punches like a pitcher unleashing curve balls to baffle a switch hitter.

Barrera is good. He can box. He can hit. He can take it. He can counter punch, a trait of a really good prizefighter.

"Now that you've seen him fight, do you think he can beat our Manny Pacquiao?"

It is Valentine Dakuykoy, my legman who's finally back after an extended stay in Monrovia. He had sneaked in on this Sunday, the day he knew so well as my favorite day to be alone to nurse my stemmed glass in front of the idiot box.

"Oh, it's you," I said. "So, you're back."

"Yes, Sir," he said. "And I'm back for good."

"What made you change your mind?" I said. "I thought you said you were leaving us because this country has become a hopeless place to live in?"

"I had thought so, Sir," he said, looking remorseful. "But I was wrong. This is still the best place in the world. Food is cheap. Clothes are cheap. And golf is cheap, too."

"Ah, so you have picked up golf."

"Yes, Sir," he said. "I wish we could have a round one of these days?"

"Sure."

"And one more thing, Sir," he said. "Over here, I can laugh not only at myself but also at the nation's top politicians —for free."

"What do you mean, `for free'"?

"I don't need to go to the movies to entertain myself," he said. "I just open my TV, switch on `TV Patrol' or `Front Page' or `Cerge for Truth' or `Talk Back' or even `Debate' and pronto! they are all there, politicians and geniuses putting me in stitches with their endless display of unexpurgated entertainment fare. Aren't we a lucky race? No pay-per-view and all free-per-view?"

I start to raise my stemmed glass.

"Now, to my old favorite sports show—the PBA," he said. "My, my, the way it has metamorphosed into a mockery from a stature of respectability really takes the cake. I can't wait to shake the hand of Mr. Clown ... err Mr. Commissioner ... for a job well done— thus far."

Change topic.

"I see that you've also seen Barrera fight," I said. "I fire back your own question: You think he can beat our Manny Pacquiao?"

He was quick to answer: "Yes."

"Explain, please?"

"Barrera has beaten the best of the best," he said. "Barrera is the only fighter to defeat erstwhile unbeaten Erik Morales and Hamed Naseem. Barrera is 57-3, with 40 knockouts."

This particular Sunday saw RPN 9 air a replay of the Barrera-Morales fight. Barrera won by unanimous decision, avenging a previous loss. The only other fighter to beat Barrera was Junior Jones—twice.

I told Valentin Dakuykoy I was not convinced of Barrera's fighting style in that Pacquiao will beat Barrera by knockout.

"If Pacquiao can't knock out Barrera," I said, "Barrera will win either by knockout or on points."

Pacquiao, the reigning IBF super bantamweight champion, has also fought some of the world's best. His 37-2-1 record, with 29 knockouts, is not something to sneeze at.

The first time I saw him fight some years back, I said Pacquiao, braggadocio and all, would become one of the world's hardest punchers in his weight division. At this stage, the only one who can beat Pacquiao is Pacquiao himself.

If Pacquiao is not in top shape when he fights Barrera, 29, on Nov. 15 in San Antonio, Texas, Pacquiao, 26, will lose. That is the only way Pacquiao could lose. Even if Barrera will also be in top form, he will fall the moment he gets hit by Pacquiao.

Nobody can withstand a Pacquiao shot. I have long ago christened Pacquiao "Powerpacked" because with each shot that he fires, the world trembles. Besides, this is the fight that Pacquiao has been dreaming of: He will earn $300,000, his biggest paycheck ever. A win will ensure him of more bouts in America, the land of megabuck fights.

"I'll make you a deal, Sir," said Valentin Dakuykoy. "If Pacquiao beats Barrera, I'll be at your service for life."

Call.

"And if Pacquiao loses, Sir?"

"What?" I shot back.

"I'll make you my caddy for life."

Oops!

SPORTSWATCH

Pasig Marathon up

THE 4TH Pasig River Heritage Marathon organizing committee has announced that all-out preparations for the upcoming PRHM 2004 which will be held on Feb. 29, 2004 are already in place. Project director Ramon Jacinto-Socco Jr. said running clubs have been regular participants of the past three PRHMs as competitors, but this year greater involvement is being drummed up. Early this year, PRHM chair Hermie Esguerra announced that the footrace will be larger in scope and will seek the involvement of more sectors. For details, call CGFI at 528-0504 and 527-4390.

Suarez, Canare make it

NATIONAL men's and women's tenpin bowling champion CJ Suarez and Jojo Canare will represent the Philippines in the 2003 AMF Bowling World Cup in Honduras next month. Suarez defeated RJ Bautista, 2 out of 3 games, in the men's division while Canare bested Liza del Rosario via the same score in the women's competition, in the national finals held at Bowling Inn on Taft Avenue last week to earn the right to represent the country in the World Cup on Sept. 27-Oct. 4 at Planeta Sipango bowling center in Tegucigalpa. Coronado Lanes, exclusive distributor of AMF bowling and billiard products in the Philippines, will join Puyat Sports in sponsoring the trip of Suarez and Canare. Paeng Nepomuceno has won the World Cup men's crown four times (1976, 1980, 1992, 1996). Lita dela Rosa won the women's crown in 1978 while Bong Coo did it in 1979.

Clark Duathlon slated

THE FOURTH leg of the 2003 Clark Duathlon Grand Prix Series gets under way at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Mabalacat, Pampanga Sunday. Starting and ending at the Centennial Road of the Clearwater Country Club, the event kicks off with a 3-km run followed by a 40-km bike and capped with a 5-k run. A project of the Clark Multisport Events Management Group Corp., Triathlon Associationof the Philippines, and Clark Development Corp., the series was put up to hone the duathletes for the Nov. 30 National Duathlon meet at the same venue. Interested parties may contact race director Leian Cruz (0919-3150327), Melvin Fausto (0929-8182906) or Noemi Garcia (045-5996235/5992854).

Bates derby on today

LOCAL cockfighting's top guns will converge at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit today as the annual Richard L. Bates 7-Stag National Derby' gets going at 4 p.m today. Derby sponsors are Sagupaan B-50 Forten, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan Hammer. On tap in today's 3-stag elimination round are more than 90 fights. The championship round is on Saturday. The list of participants include Pol Estrellado, Blandy Tolentino, Biboy Enriquez, Sonny Lagon, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Butch and Jake Macasaet, Romero Yu, Danny Ty, Ramon Mancenares, *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, Col. Katigbak, Sonny Lagon, Ucap president Raymond Velayo, Tony Lasala, Jun Topacio, Capt. Emil Chua, among others.

Ateneo enters semis

ATENEO demolished Dayspring School, 107-14, recently to sweep its five Passerelle assignments and earn a semifinal slot in the Milo BEST SBP/Passerelle basketball tournament at the Xavier School courts. Also advancing to the semifinals are defending champions La Salle Greenhills (SBP) and San Beda (Passerelle) and Ateneo's SBP campaigners. The La Sallians overwhelmed Community of Learners, 81-28, to make it six in a row in Group A, while the Bedans blasted Xavier School, 112-66, for their fifth consecutive victory in Group A of the Passerelle.

Brewers win No. 8

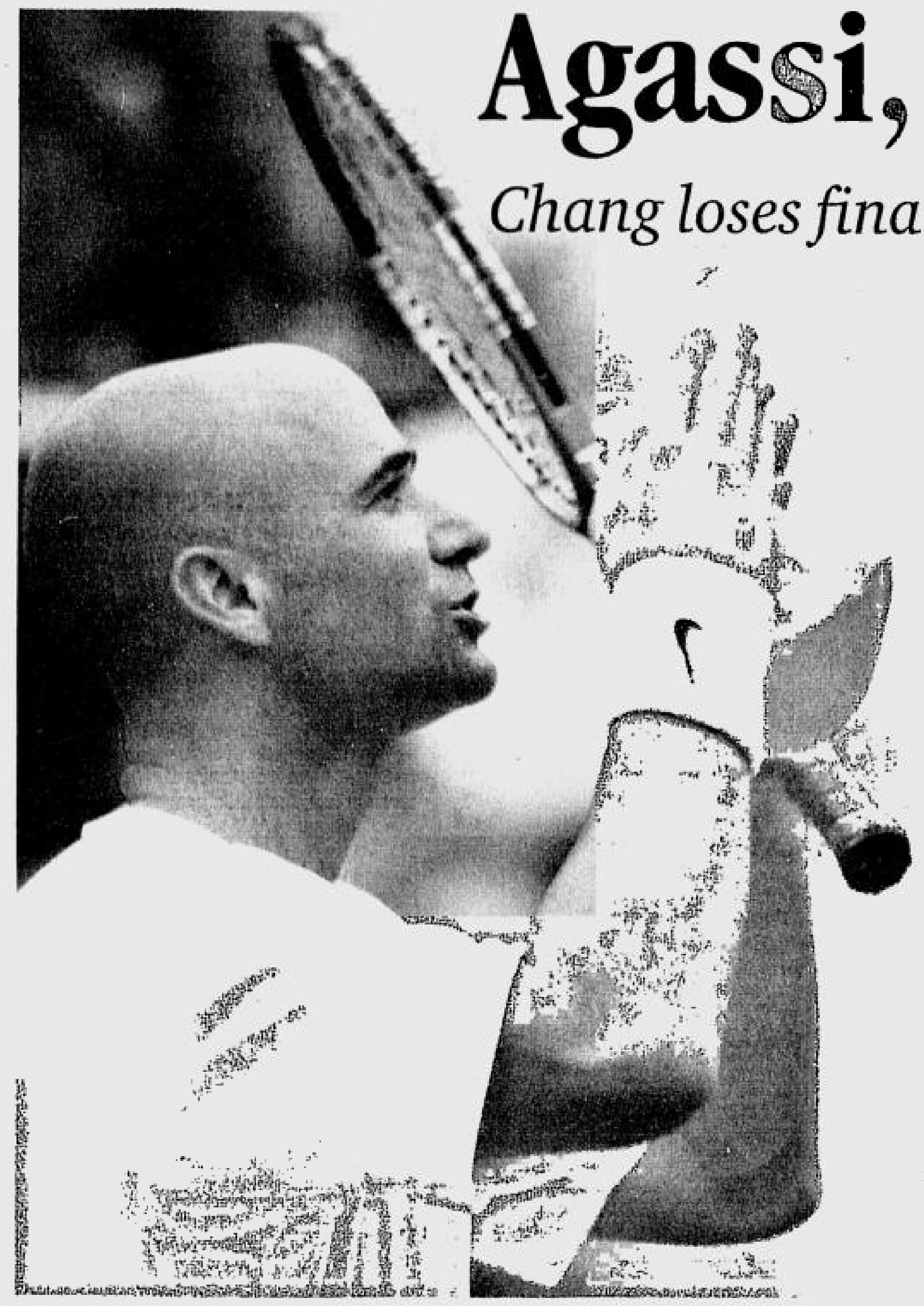
CINCINNATI—Doug Davis pitched a four-hitter Tuesday as the Milwaukee Brewers won their eighth straight game by defeating the Cincinnati Reds 7-1. Geoff Jenkins had a career high-tying four hits, including a two-run homer, as the Brewers extended their longest winning streak since a nine-game string in 1997. *AP*

Elma's second child

ELMA Muros-Posadas, the country's athletics legend, yesterday gave birth to a boy, her second with husband and coach Jojo Posadas. Posadas said the baby weighs 7.4 lb and measures 52 cm at birth at the Muntinlupa Medical Center. He will be named George Muros Posadas Jr., according to Jojo. Their first daughter Klarrize is already 10 years old and is reportedly doing the 100m dash in 14 seconds flat. *MR*

Agassi, Roddick pull thru

Chang loses final match as pro at US Open; Kuerten ousted



AGASSI acknowledges the cheers of the crowd. REUTERS

NEW YORK—Andre Agassi began his run as the oldest top-seeded player in the Open era by beating Alex Corretja of Spain 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 Tuesday in the first round of the US Open.

"It's a weird feeling. You just sort of expect to leave the dance with the ones you came with. When they decide that it's time for them, it's a sad feeling," the 33-year-old Agassi said.

"I'm certainly proud to still be doing this, this long and at this level."

At 20, fellow American Andy Roddick is just getting started, and he looked pretty impressive in handling Tim Henman of Britain 6-3, 7-6 (2), 6-3.

It was a match up worthy of Week 2 at a major rather than Day 2, but four-time Wimbledon semifinalist Henman missed two months after shoulder surgery in February and has slipped to 34th in the rankings.

Michael Chang lost his final match as a pro Tuesday at the US Open in a far more muted farewell than Pete Sampras' retirement announcement the night before.

While Sampras waited a year after his last match—beating Agassi in the 2002 US Open final—to tell the world he was finished, Chang has been on a farewell tour since the beginning of the season and made clear the Open would be it for him.

And unlike the half-hour tribute to Sampras replete with a choir and speeches, there was no big celebration of Chang's career Tuesday, although the US Tennis Association has talked with him about doing something next week.

CHANG waves goodbye. AFP

Only a few thousand fans were on hand for the start of his match against No. 15-seeded Fernando Gonzalez, but, as always, Chang gave it his all.

"On court, it would be nice to be able to be remembered as a person that gave his best—win, lose or draw," said Chang, whose career highlight was winning the 1989 French Open at age 17. "It's going to be tough leaving tennis."

He had his chances against Gonzalez, and produced a few top-notch shots, but in the end succumbed to the Chilean's all-out power game 6-3, 7-5, 5-7, 6-4.

Three-time French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil was eliminated 5-7, 6-2, 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (1) by Russian-born qualifier Dmitry Tursunov, who now lives in the United States.

Among the women, three-time major winner Jennifer Capriati of the United States needed just 35 minutes to reach the second round, overpowering Cristina Torrens Valero of Spain 6-0, 6-1.

Chang used to be among highly seeded players, reaching No. 2 in the rankings. He would have made it to No. 1 had he beaten Sampras in the 1996 US Open final.

But now, at 31, he's a step slower, and can't get to the shots he used to. He won just two of 12 matches this year.

Still, Chang showed plenty of fire Tuesday. He rocked back on his heels and pumped his arms repeatedly after a backhand passing winner down the line in the first game of the second set against Gonzalez.

Agassi, meanwhile, looks to be on top of his game.

Maybe it's because of his rigorous training, including plenty of running up hills. Perhaps it's his style of play. Or it simply could be that he saved some energy during a mid-career crisis, when he tumbled out of the top 100 and wound up resorting to minor league tournaments to work his way back.

Never before had a man his age risen to No. 1 in the ATP Tour computer rankings. *AP*

BADMINTON OPEN

Top guns reach quarterfinals

DEFENDING champion Jan Piencenaves and second seed Kennevic Asuncion sizzled again even as three unfancied entries entered the quarterfinal round of the men's singles in the JVC Open Badminton Championships at the PSC Badminton Hall at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila yesterday.

Piencenaves subdued Ricky Bartolome, 15-7, 15-7, and lined him up against one of the three lesser-lights who reached the next round of the centerpiece elite category which features the members of the national team.

Wilson Frias, who ousted fifth-ranked Wally Fernandez Tuesday, added William Gabuelo to his growing list of victims as he fashioned out a 15-6, 15-0 victory over the Ateneo-Yonex bet to gain a crack at the top ranked player in the fold.

BOGIE de Guia (right) prepares to return a shot as Valle Verde teammate Wally Fernandez looks on during their doubles match against Marfre Pranada and Julius Ching of Independent Team in the elite category in the JVC Open Badminton Championships at the PSC Badminton Hall. Valle Verde won, 15-2, 15-3.

Asuncion, aiming to regain the crown he won in the inaugural staging of the event put up by electronics giant JVC in 2001, easuily downed Jan Mijares, 15-1, 15-1, to arrange a duel with Santo Tomas' Alfredo Mailon, Jr., who rallied from a set down to beat Rhamir Antonio, 13-15, 15-14, 15-8.

Kennie Asuncion and Alma Ledesma likewise continued to live up to their billing as the top two players in the distaff side by beating their respective rivals to advance to the quarterfinals.

Kennie, bidding for a third straight crown in this event, ripped May Rodriguez, 11-0, 11-0, while Ledesma whipped Joan Javier, 11-3, 11-1.

Jaime Junio, who also upended fancied Prospero Aguilar in the round of 32, outlasted Bogie De Guia, 15-4, 8-15, 15-6 to set up a match with joint third seeded bet Rodel Bartolome, who downed Rodil Sertan, 15-10, 15-1.

But it was Lloyd Escoses who pulled off the day's biggest upset when he stunned fifth-ranked Reynaldo Selga of UST with a 15-11, 15-4 victory in the other draw in the upper bracket. The 22-year-old BCMI-FEU, who will join Piencenaves and Asuncion in the RP team competing in this year's SEA Games in Vietnam, will next face Arolas Amahit, a joint third ranked player who swamped Christopher Flores, 15-13, 15-1.

Meanwhile, badminton action shifts from Rizal Memorial to Glorietta Activity Center today with the staging of the quarterfinal round of the men's and ladies singles, mixed doubles, and men's and ladies doubles events starting at 12:30 p.m.

Joining Kennie Asuncion and Ledesma in the last 8 of the ladies division are Alana May Olavides, who beat Dhoreena Bognot, 11-2, 11-2; Katheen Anasco, who defeated Jelica Molino, 11-1, 11-5; Melody Villaceran, who whipped Myla Rebatis, 11-1, 11-1; Andrea Chu, who scored a walkover win over Jackie Floresca; Irene Chiu, who booted out Sheryl Caraig, 11-1, 11-1; and Amanda Carpo, who dominated Aldellyn Po, 11-4, 11-4.

In the ladies doubles of the seniors category, the Teresa Guevarra-Elvira Pascua tandem outclassed Leonchita Lascano and Maria Clarette Gonzales, 15-7, 15-5, to set up a semifinal clash with the Jeanette Banquiles-Guinevere Chan pair, who blanked Gilda Guillermo and Glenda Litong, 15-0, 15-0.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1–1. You and Me 2. Ocean Dignity 3. Rose In Bloom 4. Earth Angel

Race 2 – 1. Kagilagilalas 2. Arbiter 3. Nuts Again 4. Fair Go 5. Silver Lining

Race 3 –1. Ahead of Time 2. Habagat 3. Furthermore 4. JJ's Friend 5. Kiss Em Goodbye 6. Dalia

Race 4 – 1. Hezabellaglo 2. Mr. Lucas 3. Perfect Nine

Race 5 – 1. Genesis Two 2. Profit Master 3. Sagittarius 4. Mutya ng Nayon/Pasirit

Race 6 – 1. Ayra's Pet 2. Sealed With A Kiss 3. Rose and Toy 4. Native Talent 5. Maple My Love 6. Bambino

Race 7 – 1. Divide and Rule 2. Happy Again 3. Celebration 4. Run Like D wind 5. Hazitmade 5.

Race 8 - 1. May's Magic 2. Bring Home D Bacon 3. Pana-Panahon 4. Kusang Loob

Race 9 – 1. Arrivederci 2. Hurricane Doding 3. Love and Kisses/Classic Native 4. Boys Town Kid 5. Arrogante 6. Fountain of Gold

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

TENNIS: US Open 2003; 7 a.m. (r 7 p.m.) and 11 p.m.; Star Sports—Get your fill of backhands, forehands, baseline shots and blistering serves from Flushing Meadows as second round action continues.

French Open 2003; 1 p.m. (r); Star Sports—Take another look at clay court action from Roland Garros.

BASKETBALL: Tournament of the Americas; USA vs Mexico; 10 a.m. Solar Sports; r-10 p.m.; IBC 13 and Solar Sports; Brazil vs Puerto Rico; 8 p.m.; Solar Sports—The battle for Olympic slots heats up in Puerto Rico.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Ex-Kenyan runner scores for Qatar; Drummond out

SAINT-DENIS, France—Stephen Cherono would have extended Kenya's remarkable 12-year winning streak in the 3,000 steeplechase. Instead, he halted the Kenyan dominance and won the title for his new country of Qatar.

One month after switching nationalities, the runner now known as Saif Saeed Shaheen gave his adopted nation its first ever World Championship medal—and a gold at that.

"I don't speak Arabic and I don't know the words to the anthem, but my whole heart was trying for Qatar," Shaheen said. "Some people in Kenya are not happy that the gold is no longer in Kenyan hands. But the people of Qatar welcome it. They are very proud."

Ezekiel Kemboi of Kenya, who settled for the silver, was reluctant to call Shaheen's victory a Kenyan defeat.

"I am not upset," Kemboi said. "He is a Kenyan. He has been a Kenyan since he was born. He only just joined Qatar. In my idea he is still Kenyan. The medal is a Kenyan medal."

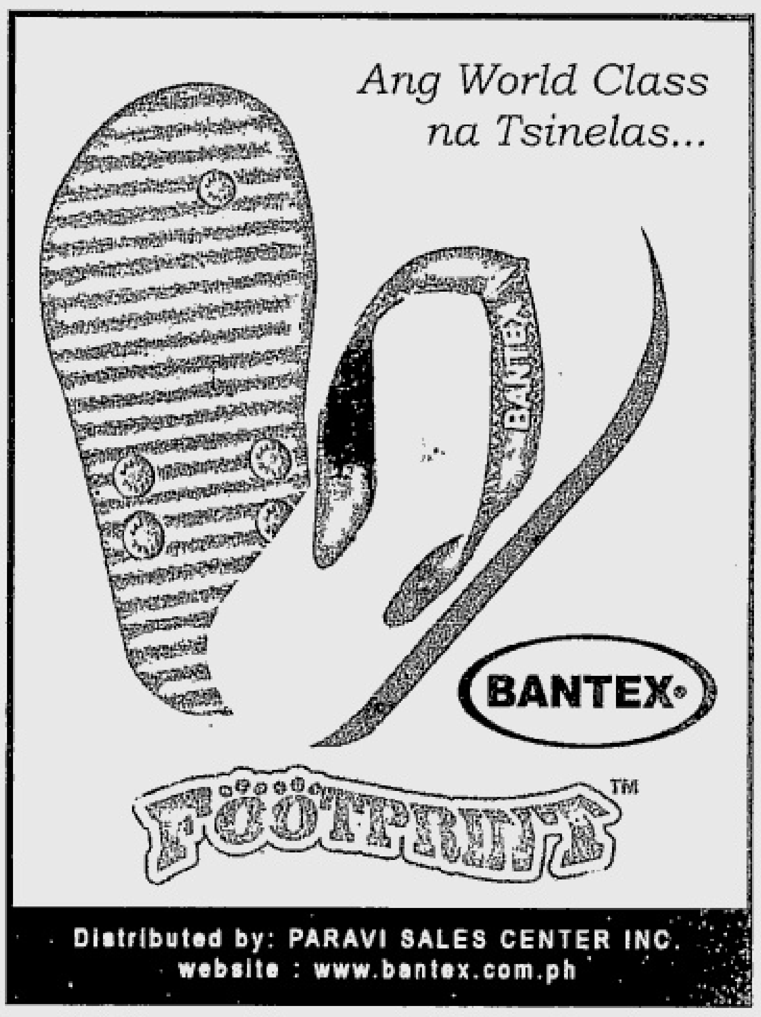
Shaheen was having none of it. He didn't even speak to his own brother, Abraham Cherono, who finished fifth.

Shaheen switched nationalities and assumed a new name in return for a financially secure future, after being promised US$1,000 a month for the rest of his life by oil-rich Middle East country.

On a day with plenty of upsets and off-track developments, some champions did defend their titles. Several past champions and medal hopefuls, however, did not have such a good day:

- United States sprinter Jon Drummond decided to pull out of the championships rather than being kicked out for throwing a tantrum after being disqualified in a 100-meter heat Sunday. The IAAF said it was officially throwing his out anyway. Drummond had been hoping to run in the weekend's relay.
- Tim Montgomery, the 100 world record-holder, left for home, further weakening the US relay team, which will also be without Maurice Greene, whose six-year reign as 100 champion ended Monday when a leg injury led to his elimination in the semifinals. Montgomery finished fifth in the final and left without giving a reason.
- Defending 200 champion and Olympic gold medalist Kostas Kenteris dropped out because of a thigh injury, a day before Wednesday's heats. The Greek siled at 5.60 after clearing 5.93 earlier this year.
- Defending champion Olga Yegorova of Russia failed to qualify for the women's 5,000 final. She finished only 10th in her heat.
- Germany's Lars Riedel finished fourth in the discus, failing to capture a record-tying sixth title.

Wednesday's finals are the men's 50K walk, the women's shot put, the women's 100-meter hurdles, the men's 1,500, the women's 400 and the end of the decathlon. *AP*



Ang World Class na Tsinelas...

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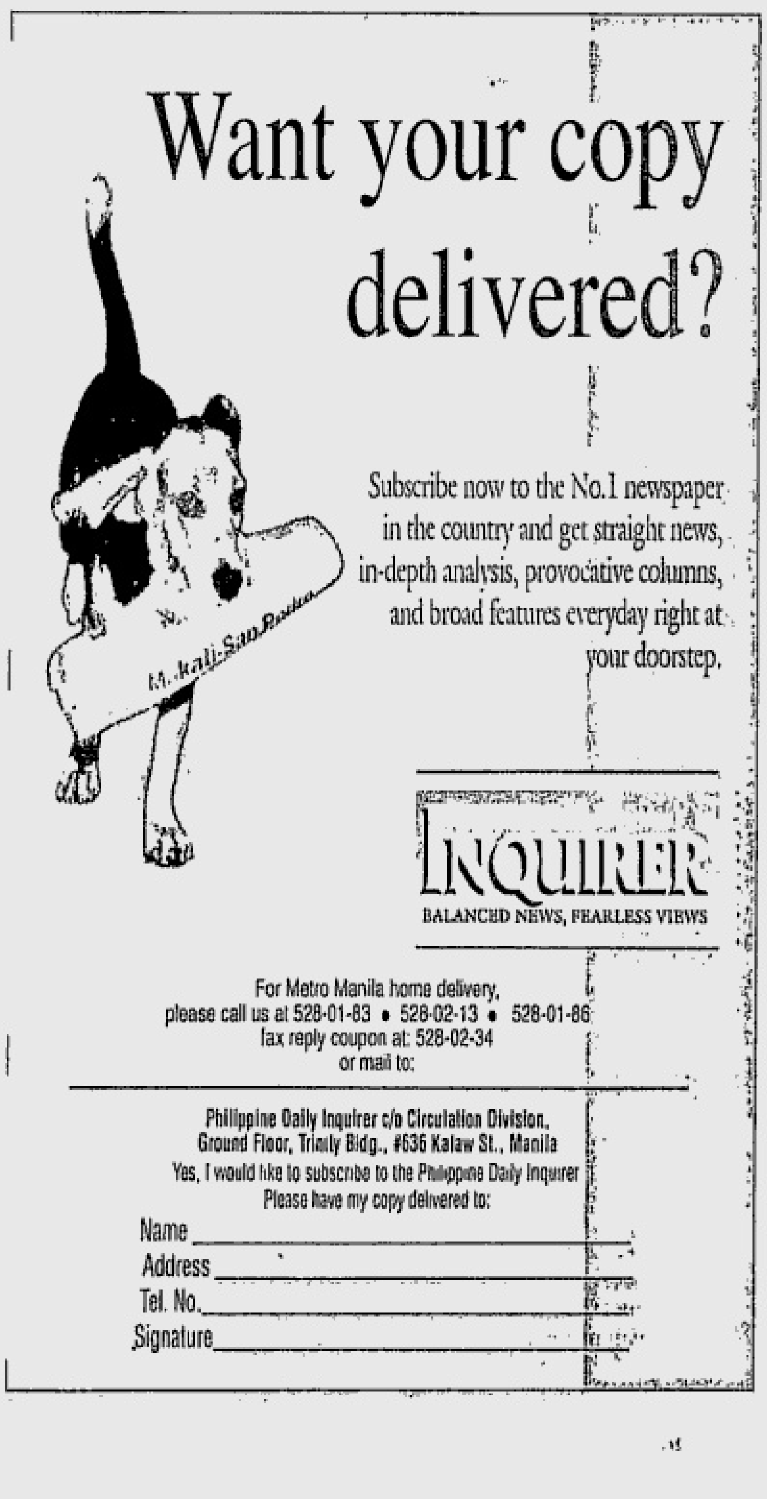

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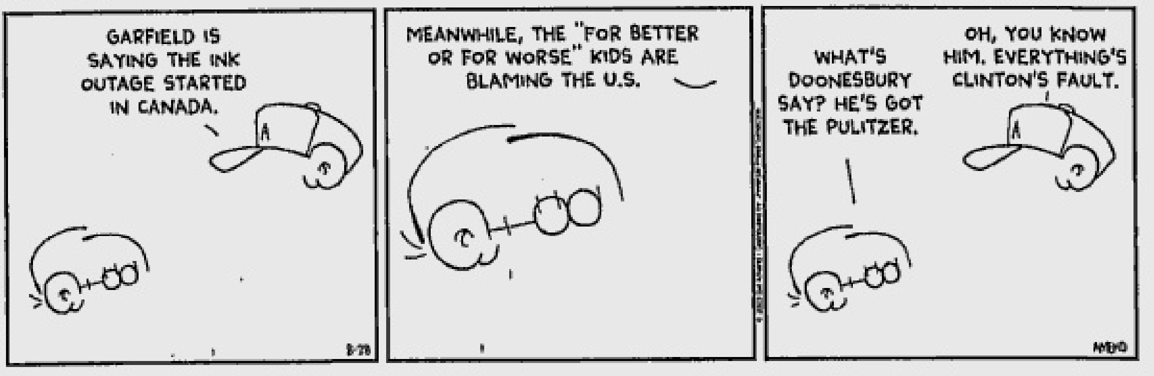
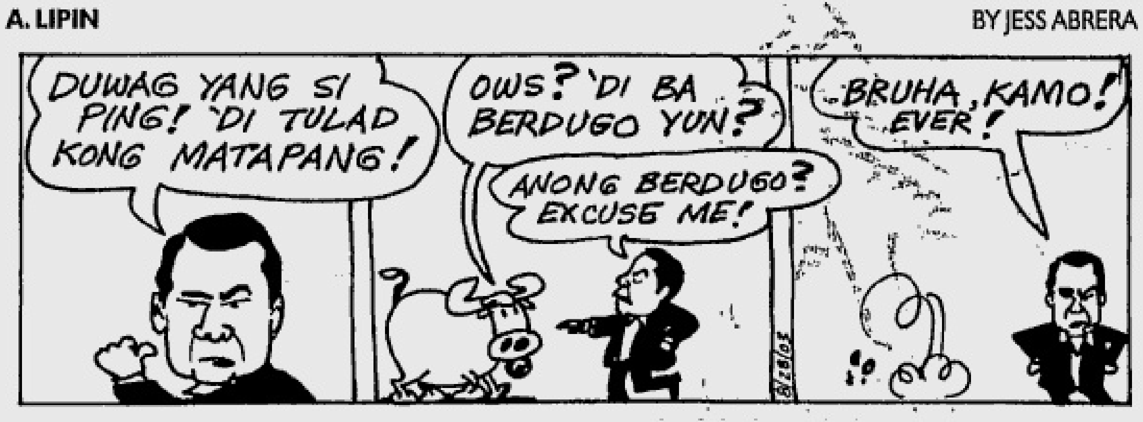
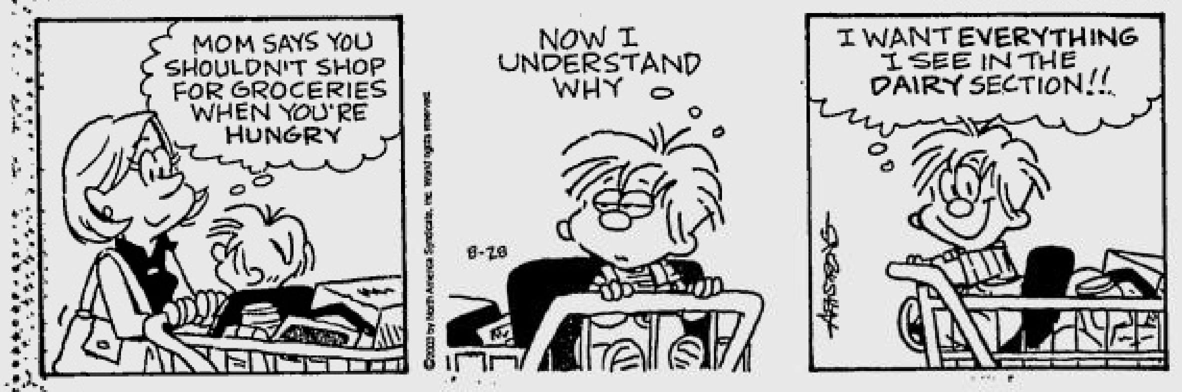

GARFIELD IS SAYING THE INK OUTAGE STARTED IN CANADA.
MEANWHILE, THE "FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE" KIDS ARE BLAMING THE U.S.
WHAT'S DOONESBURY SAY? HE'S GOT THE PULITZER.
OH, YOU KNOW HIM. EVERYTHING'S CLINTON'S FAULT.
8-28
AMEND

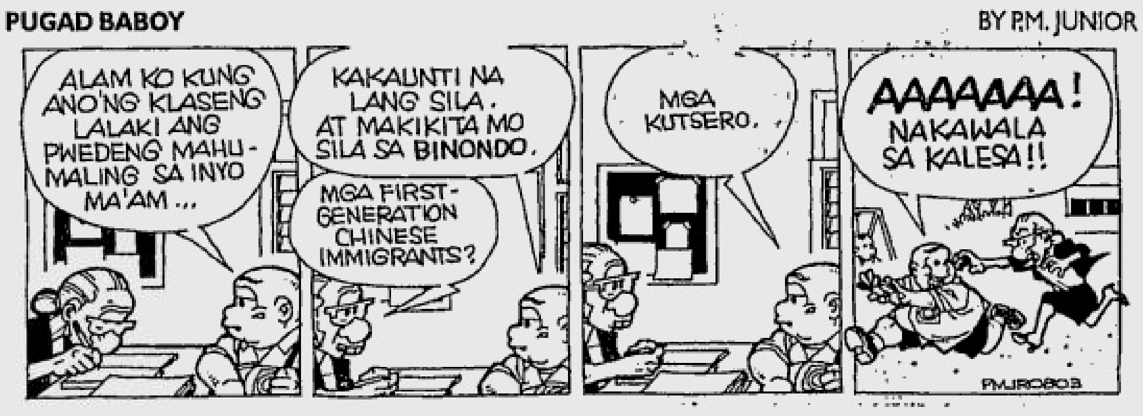
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


DUWAG YANG SI PING! 'DI TULAD KONG MATAPANG!
OWS? 'DI BA BERDUGO YUN?
ANONG BERDUGO? EXCUSE ME!
BRUHA, KAMO! EVER!
8/28/03

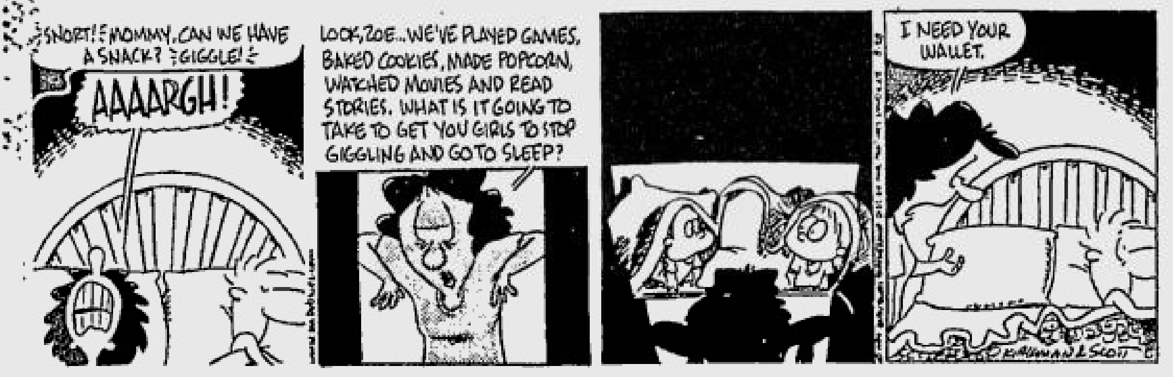
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MOM SAYS YOU SHOULDN'T SHOP FOR GROCERIES WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY
NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY
I WANT EVERYTHING I SEE IN THE DAIRY SECTION!!
8-28
ARMSTRONG

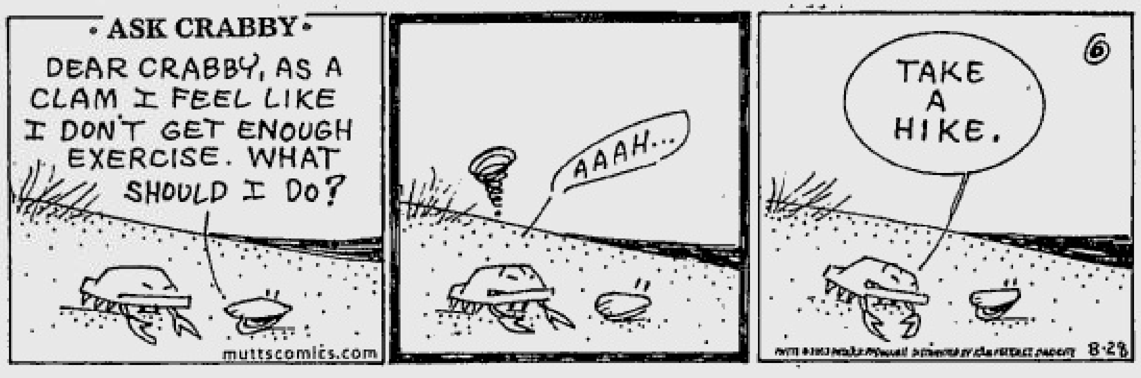
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM KO KUNG ANO'NG KLASENG LALAKI ANG PWEDENG MAHUMALING SA INYO MA'AM ...
KAKAUNTI NA LANG SILA. AT MAKIKITA MO SILA SA BINONDO.
MGA FIRST-GENERATION CHINESE IMMIGRANTS?
MGA KUTSERO.
AAAAAAA! NAKAWALA SA KALESA!!
PMJR0803

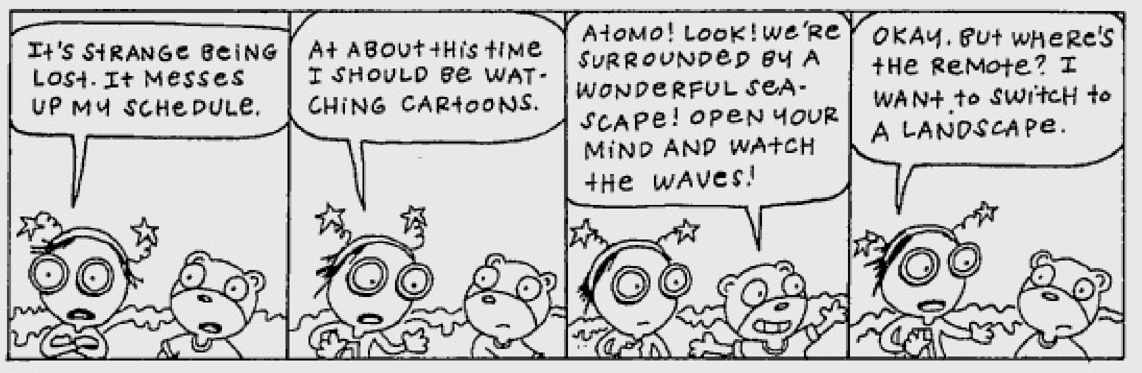
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


SNORT! MOMMY, CAN WE HAVE A SNACK? GIGGLE!
AAAARGH!
LOOK, ZOE... WE'VE PLAYED GAMES, BAKED COOKIES, MADE POPCORN, WATCHED MOVIES AND READ STORIES. WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE TO GET YOU GIRLS TO STOP GIGGLING AND GO TO SLEEP?
I NEED YOUR WALLET.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

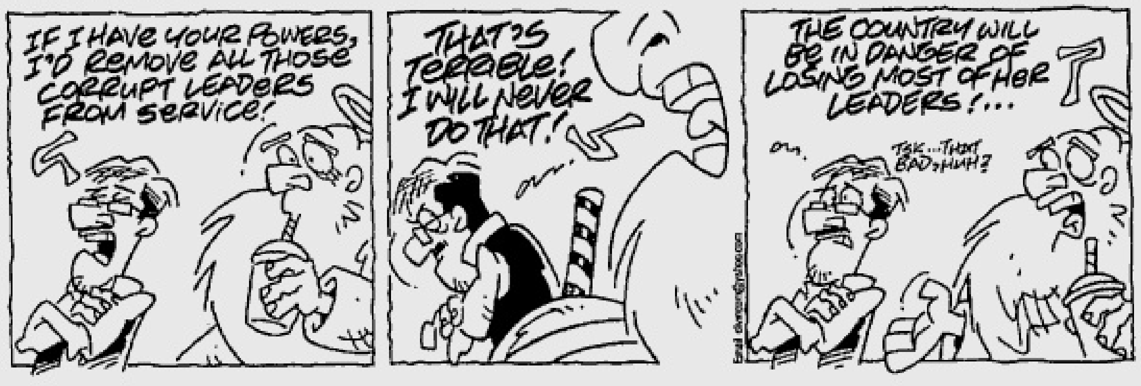
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


• ASK CRABBY •
DEAR CRABBY, AS A CLAM I FEEL LIKE I DON'T GET ENOUGH EXERCISE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
AAAH...
TAKE A HIKE.
6
muttscomics.com
8-28

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


It's strange being lost. It messes up my schedule.
At about this time I should be watching cartoons.
Atomo! Look! We're surrounded by a wonderful seascape! Open your mind and watch the waves!
Okay. But where's the remote? I want to switch to a landscape.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


IF I HAVE YOUR POWERS, I'D REMOVE ALL THOSE CORRUPT LEADERS FROM SERVICE!
THAT'S TERRIBLE! I WILL NEVER DO THAT!
THE COUNTRY WILL BE IN DANGER OF LOSING MOST OF HER LEADERS!...
TSK...THAT BAD, HUH?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are intelligent and articulate. You have wonderful language skills. Because of this you are a convincing communicator. You are a good debater and can persuade others to your point of view. People frequently come to you for advice (as well they should). Major and exciting changes take place in your life this year.
Birthdate of: LeAnn Rimes, singer; Jason Priestley, actor; Shania Twain, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Delays, confused communication, late mail and other problems can be frustrating at work now. This is because Mercury is retrograde. It will be over by Sept. 20th.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Old flames and ex-lovers are on the scene once again. This is always a challenging situation. You're not sure whether to be tempted or horrified.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Relatives might be camping on your doorstep now. Lots of old business demand your attention. It's a good time to wrap up and finish things now and in the next few weeks.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Transportation delays, breakdowns with cars and trucks, and missed buses are just some of the headaches you might have now. Make sure your phone bill is paid.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You want to buy something that you've been thinking about for a long time. Actually, until Sept. 20th, this is a poor time to buy ground transportation and computers.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's not the big things that are frustrating; it's the little things. Lost keys, misplaced papers and searching for ordinary items seem to dog your footsteps every day now. Patience.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Ignore feelings of self-doubt or inferiority. In the next few weeks, you might second-guess yourself a lot. Actually, you're as good as you ever were.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Expect to see old friends once again. If they owe you money, now is the time to collect. Lots of stuff from the past is bubbling to the surface.

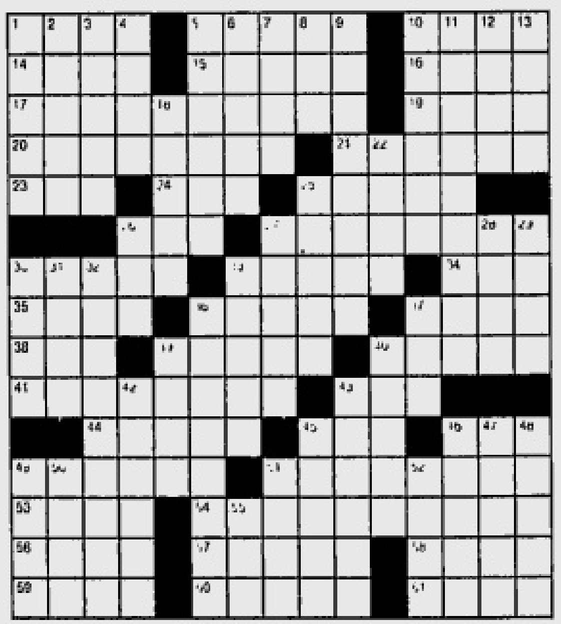
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might run into an old boss now or in the next few weeks. Similarly, you might have a chance to work at a previous place of employment. This is not a bad idea.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you plan on traveling today or in the next few weeks, try to go someplace you have been before. Double-check all details.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a good time to wrap up delays with insurance matters and old debts. Old business goes very smoothly now. However, new things are stalled in the water.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have to deal with ex-partners now. Consider this an opportunity to finish old business and wipe the slate clean. You will be surprised by how easy it is to do this.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY
8/28/03

ACROSS
1 Charity
5 Decreed
10 Washer cycle
14 Fit together
15 January in Juarez
16 Roof piece
17 Pleasing irresistibly
19 Pinza of "South Pacific"
20 Native American confederacy
21 Shameless
23 Cobb and Hardin
24 Chess pc.
25 Gettysburg victor
26 Average guy
27 Like St. Stephen
30 Cornwall river
33 Ream part
34 Altar sentence
35 Long of Louisiana
36 Like a beehive
37 Walking stride
38 Trimming tool
39 Gaming table cover
40 Abstention periods
41 Befitting Oz
43 French sculptor
44 Very skilled
45 PA nuclear accident site
46 One-time female mil. grp.
49 One-dimensional
51 Far from a valentine
53 Rara follower
54 White-collar crooks
56 Slanted surface
57 Cubic meter
58 Novel addition?
59 Capped joint
60 Jazz section
61 African nation

DOWN
1 Outer boundary
2 Suspicious
3 Basis for Windows, originally
4 Cager O'Neal
5 Change postal maps
6 Dark
7 Hilo garlands
8 Sea eagle
9 "Much Ado about Nothing" character
10 Constant
11 Pie shops?
12 Nastase of tennis
13 Sign gas
18 Paramount producer Adolph
22 Appraise
25 Indian corn
26 Blue bird
27 Confused
28 Redo a column
29 Periods
30 Get friendlier?
31 BMW rival
32 First balcony
33 Bee product?
36 Unfavorable notices
37 Space
39 La __ Tar Pits
40 On the __ (broken)
42 "__ Fideles"
43 Elicits a gasp
45 In that place
46 "Christina's World" painter
47 Blood line
48 United
49 Be short on
50 Nobelist Pavlov
51 Wild goat
52 Util. bill
55 Transit letters

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

G	O	S	P	E	L	■	S	C	U	T	■	S	B	A
A	R	T	E	R	Y	■	I	R	A	E	■	T	I	N
M	O	R	N	I	N	G	N	E	W	S	■	A	R	C
■	■	■	M	E	N	A	G	E	■	L	A	R	G	O
P	A	P	A	■	S	I	L	L	■	A	S	T	I	N
A	L	O	N	G	■	N	E	S	S	■	S	R	T	A
S	O	S	■	A	W	E	D	■	T	H	A	I	■	■
S	E	T	T	L	E	R	■	F	E	E	D	B	A	G
■	■	G	O	A	L	■	B	A	R	R	■	U	R	N
A	F	A	R	■	D	U	O	S	■	A	P	N	E	A
R	A	Z	O	R	■	R	O	T	C	■	S	E	A	T
R	E	E	S	E	■	B	R	E	A	T	H	■	■	■
O	R	T	■	P	L	A	I	N	D	E	A	L	E	R
W	I	T	■	L	E	N	S	■	R	E	W	I	R	E
S	E	E	■	Y	E	A	H	■	E	N	S	U	E	D

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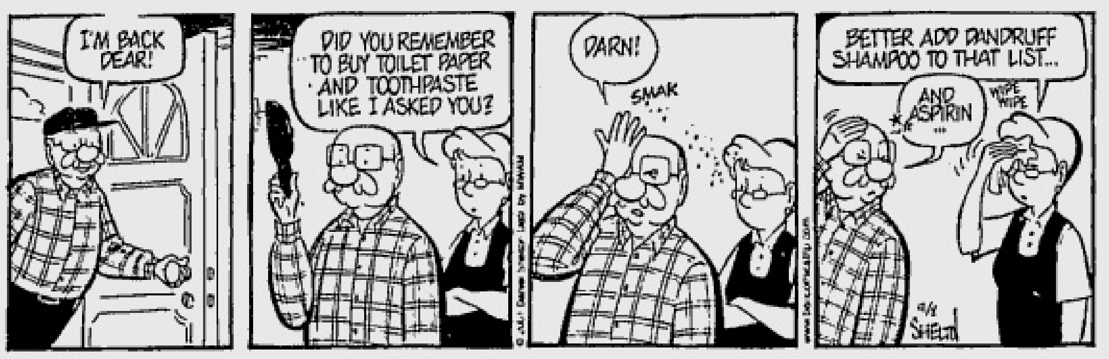
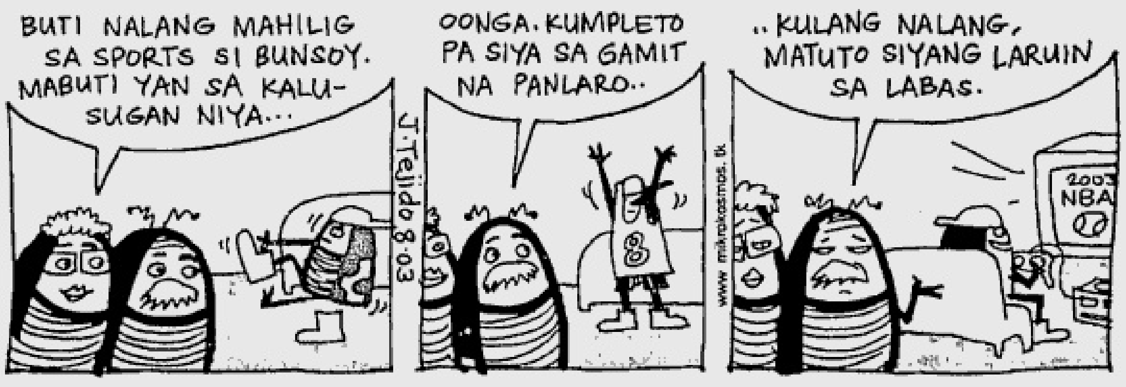
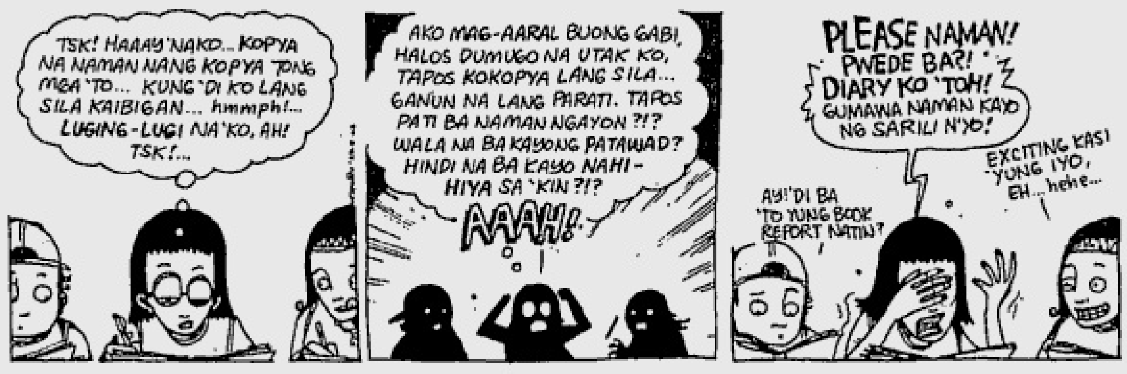
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


I'M BACK DEAR!
DID YOU REMEMBER TO BUY TOILET PAPER AND TOOTHPASTE LIKE I ASKED YOU?
DARN!
SMAK
BETTER ADD DANDRUFF SHAMPOO TO THAT LIST...
AND ASPIRIN
WIPE WIPE
SHELTON

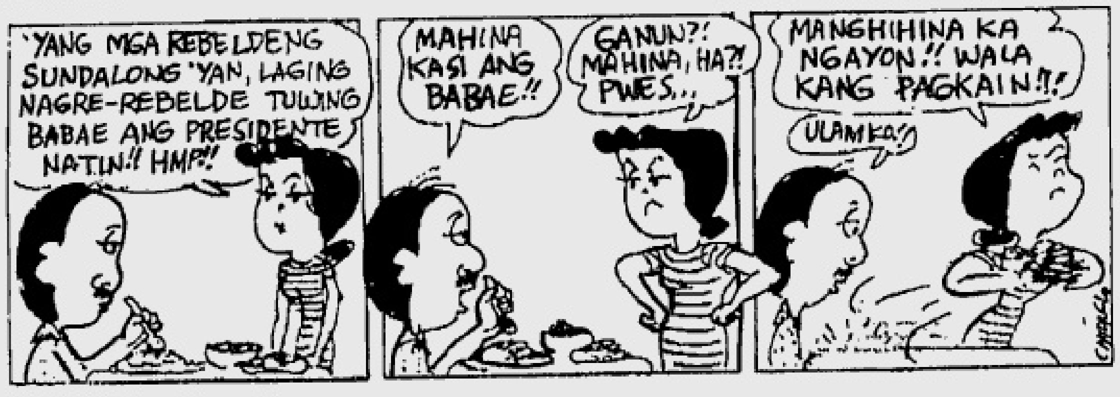
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUTI NALANG MAHILIG SA SPORTS SI BUNSOY. MABUTI YAN SA KALUSUGAN NIYA...
J.Tejido 8.03
OONGA. KUMPLETO PA SIYA SA GAMIT NA PANLARO..
8
www.mikrokosmos.tk
..KULANG NALANG, MATUTO SIYANG LARUIN SA LABAS.
2003 NBA

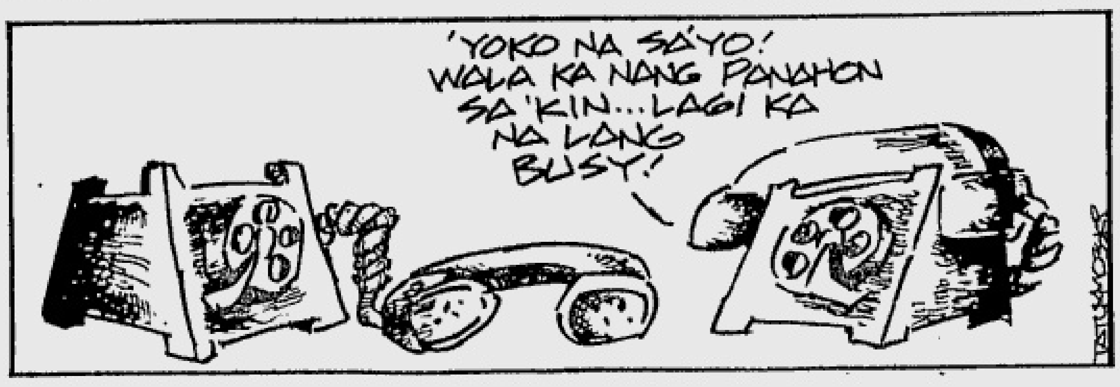
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


TSK! HAAAY NAKO... KOPYA NA NAMAN NANG KOPYA 'TONG MGA 'TO... KUNG 'DI KO LANG SILA KAIBIGAN... hmmph!... LUGING-LUGI NA'KO, AH! TSK!...
AKO MAG-AARAL BUONG GABI, HALOS DUMUGO NA UTAK KO, TAPOS KOKOPYA LANG SILA... GANUN NA LANG PARATI. TAPOS PATI BA NAMAN NGAYON?!? WALA NA BA KAYONG PATAWAD? HINDI NA BA KAYO NAHIHIYA SA 'KIN?!?
AAAH!
PLEASE NAMAN! PWEDE BA?! DIARY KO 'TOH! GUMAWA NAMAN KAYO NG SARILI N'YO!
AY! 'DI BA 'TO YUNG BOOK REPORT NATIN?
EXCITING KASI 'YUNG IYO, EH... hehe...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


'YANG MGA REBELDENG SUNDALONG 'YAN, LAGING NAGRE-REBELDE TUWING BABAE ANG PRESIDENTE NATIN!! HMP!!
MAHINA KASI ANG BABAE!!
GANUN?! MAHINA, HA?! PWES..
MANGHIHINA KA NGAYON!! WALA KANG PAGKAIN!!!
ULAM KA!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


'YOKO NA SA'YO! WALA KA NANG PANAHON SA'KIN...LAGI KA NA LANG BUSY!
TATUM MOBER

Tours, Leisure & Chow

cmadamba@inquirer.com.ph
897-8808 local 209 and 238

Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphics Design

The latest gym equipment at The Bellevue Hotel's spa club

THE BELLEVUE Hotel redefines the usual concept in gym design and fitness training. With the opening of the new Bellevue Spa Club, guests to Alabang's full service business hotel enjoy a multitude of personalized services and technologically advanced facilities to renew and recharge.

The Bellevue Spa Club boasts of a spacious, fully equipped gym with the latest exercise equipment from Europe and the United States. The designs of these machines are considered the safest in the world because of strict regulations imposed by European and US governments.

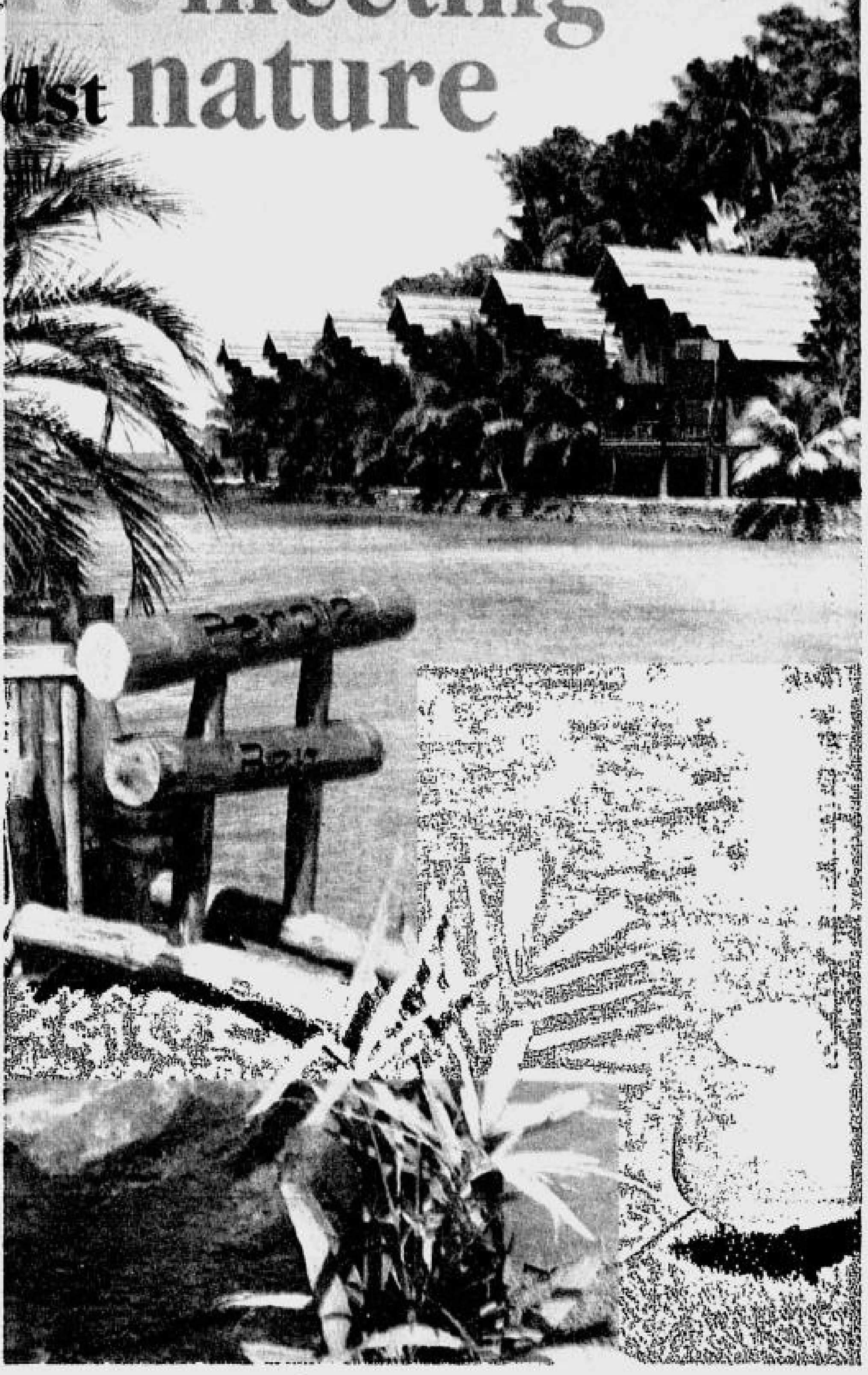
Other unique additions to the gym are state-of-the-art treadmills used by the US military, Nasa, NBA and the NFL, among others.

Trainers who are experts in prescribing fitness programs are certified physical therapists as well, to ensure that guests make the most of their workouts. Changing rooms, showers and lockers assure privacy and security.

"Another distinct feature of the gym is that it overlooks the poolside and café. A lush, tropical landscape is in full view, giving a pleasant and uplifting mood rather than the feeling of self-punishment," Marjorie Lopingco, The Bellevue Spa Club operator, points out.

The Bellevue Hotel is fast becoming the destination of choice in the southern Metro Manila area because of its warm, intimate and home-like atmosphere. It boasts of 222 deluxe and suite rooms, modern communications and banquet facilities, an Asian specialty restaurant and an entertainment center on its topmost floor with a music lounge, main and sports bar, among others. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

Alternative meeting venue amidst nature



THE BARCELÓ Pearl Farm Island Resort creates the "Board of Directors Package" to provide conference and meeting organizers an alternative venue to host company events amidst the resort's natural beauty, privacy and comfort.

The "Board of Directors Package" includes overnight accommodation, roundtrip airport and boat transfers, welcome drink, set lunch and set dinner, AM and PM snacks, and breakfast. Conference amenities include whole-day use of the function room, complimentary use of the audio equipment, overhead projector, whiteboard and flipchart, use of VCD, paper and pencils, and free candy mints. A complimentary hospitality room will also be provided for organizing small cocktails to entertain guests and colleagues.

This Samal Island resort provides an ideal setting to hold company meetings and planning sessions within a relaxed and carefree environment. Blending with the resort's natural surrounding are meeting venues, equipped with conference facilities that can accommodate 50 to 70 people. It also has Deluxe Accommodation of 73 guestrooms, suites, cottages on stilts perched above the sea and exclusive villas that are designed from Maranao and Samal ethnic influences in both materials and form. Inside, decorative details and multihued patterns reflect the island's vibrant culture as inspired by the region's rich tribal ancestry. The resort's turquoise waters provide the perfect venue to host a variety of water sports activities that include wind surfing, water polo, jet skiing, water skiing, banana boat rides and scuba diving. It has a Maranao infinity pool and Mandaya pool to plunge in and relax the senses after a tiring day. This limited offer is priced at only P4,500 net/person (single occupancy) and P3,350 net/person (twin sharing occupancy) and is valid until Dec. 15.

For inquiries and reservations on the "Board of Directors Package," call its Manila sales office at 867-2951/ 867-2847 and 867-1159. Visit www.barcelo-asia.com.

Where to Stop Where to GO

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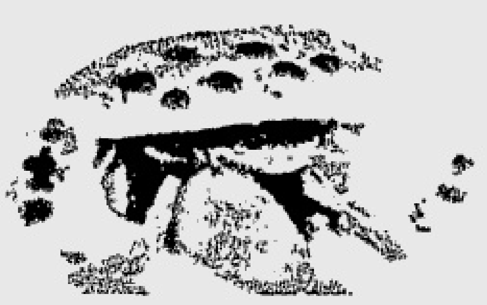
Prince Albert Rotisserie's new business lunch offerings



INTERCONTINENTAL Manila's famed Prince Albert Rotisserie offers a new business lunch menu each week that suits the busy executive looking for fast yet affordable fine dining. Menu offerings are reasonably priced at P650 per person for a 2-course menu and P800 per person for a 3-course menu exclusive of service and local government taxes. Lunch suggestions for Aug. 25 to 29 are the following: Clam Soup scented with Saffron Butter Sauce for Soup; Steamed Tilapia Fillet scented with Coriander and Olive Oil with a Parmentier of Pumpkin and Beetroot Dressing or Ricotta Gnocchi with Chicken Wing Confit and Asparagus Tips and Arugula Salad or Shiitake Ravioli scented with Cepe Mushroom Powder Rosti Jus and Bouquet of Mesclun for Appetizers; Braised Flounder Fillet in Rock Lobster Jus with Sauteed Fennel and Crushed Potatoes scented with Anchovy or Roasted Barramundi Fillet studded with Black Olives with Sauteed Vegetable Provencal Style scented with Tomato Jus and Mashed Basil or Pan-Fried Salmon Steak served with Crushed Sundried Tomatoes and Grenobloise Sauce or Veal Loin cooked in Cocotte with Potatoes stuffed with Vegetable and Bacon or Braised Lamb Shank scented with Lemon and Coriander coated with Dried Fruit and Mixed Nuts on a Bed of Couscous Vegetable or Chicken Breast Braised in Red Wine thickened with Duck Liver and served with Gratin of Tagliolini scented with Parmesan for the Main Course; and Pear Amandine with Blackberry Sauce for Dessert. A choice of freshly brewed coffee or tea comes with the meal.

Prince Albert Rotisserie is open Monday to Friday for lunch and Monday to Saturday for dinner. It is best to reserve a table in advance. For reservations, call 815-9711 local 262.

Mandarin Oriental offers weight-loss yoga program

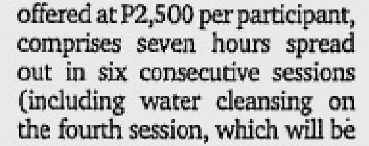
UNDERSCORING its commitment to health and wellness, Mandarin Oriental's Pure Yoga conducts a weight reduction therapy program under the direction of resident yoga instructor, Prakash Singh Bisht, from Sept. 1 to 27.

The program aims to help its participants shed off excess pounds through various yoga poses complemented by breathing and cleansing exercises. These yogic methods are widely believed to improve blood circulation, posture, muscle tone and flexibility, all of which lead to effective weight reduction and eventually pave the way for better overall physical and mental health.

"Excessive body weight imposes unnecessary strain on the body's various physiological systems, and doing vigorous exercises further stress the body", says Prakash who earned his diploma in yoga education from Kaivalyadhama GS College of Yoga and Cultural Synthesis, one of the leading yoga institutions in India. "While yoga tones your body, builds strength and makes you more supple, it also helps manage a host of ailments that are associated with obesity like heart diseases, hypertension, and diabetes," says Prakash.

Pure Yoga's weight reduction therapy program will be implemented in two batches. The first batch runs from Sept. 1 to 13, and the second batch from Sept. 15 to 27. A full course, which is offered at P2,500 per participant, comprises seven hours spread out in six consecutive sessions (including water cleansing on the fourth session, which will be two hours long). Time slots available are 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., or from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; or Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. A minimum of three and a maximum of 12 students will be admitted in each class. Deadline for registration is on Aug. 27 for the first batch and Sept. 10 for the second batch.

The program is not advised for people who are pregnant, suffering from peptic ulcers or slipped discs, or who have recently undergone surgery in the spine or abdomen.



For more information on Pure Yoga's weight reduction therapy program, call 750-8888 extension 2105.

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Finally, to complete the fly series, we bring you "dine and fly". Treat a friend for a buffet meal at Café Uno and pay half the price for the other's buffet meal. Just present your airline ticket valid on the same day of availment of promo. This is valid only on buffet meals not inclusive of drinks. Also enjoy 20 percent discount on ala carte menus.

So before you leave or when you return to Cebu, Waterfront Mactan is the way to go. For inquiries and reservations, call Waterfront Airport Hotel (032) 340-4888 or the Manila sales and reservations office at 687-0888.

THIEN Duong Vietnamese Restaurant of Dusit Hotel Nikko will take food lovers to a culinary trip to an authentic Vietnamese cuisine with "Hanoi's Best" Food Festival from Sept. 8 to 17. In cooperation with Vietnam Airlines, the restaurant will fly in guest Chef Kien Do from Hotel Nikko Hanoi who will dish out an impressive repertoire of menu during this food extravaganza. Available for lunch and dinner. For queries and reservations, call 867-3333 extension 3354.

10 best Filipino films cited

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

A COUPLE of weeks ago, a friend and colleague called up to ask me to come up with my list of the 10 best Filipino movies. I had just listed the 50 best local films for another survey, so my task this time was to further narrow that field of 50 down to 10.,

That initially seemed easy, but it turned out to be a tall order because I had to eliminate so many of my personal favorites.

Finally, after much gnashing of teeth and stressful deliberation, I came up with my list of 10 best, even. But my friend didn't call when he was supposed to, so I'm "submitting" the list via this column.

The 10 best Filipino feature films, ever-in no particular order:

"Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag." "Biyaya ng Lupa." "Juan Tamad Goes to Congress."

"Geron Busabos, ang Batang Quiapo." "Kundiman ng Lahi." "Ganito Kami, Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?"

"Batch '81." "Sister Stella L." "The Moises Padilla Story." "Jose Rizal."

What's *your* list of 10 best Filipino movies?

TV pioneers

ABS-CBN's 50th anniversary celebration is coming up shortly, so the channel is inviting people who've worked for the radio-TV company to a reunion. We hope that the people in charge of inviting network pioneers have gone out of their way to contact **Tita Muñoz and Nikki Ross.**

We had dinner with those two fabulous ladies recently, and they revealed that they worked for the company's first TV outfit in the '50s—Nikki in a 15-minute musical program, and Tita both in production and in front of the cameras.

People interested in fleshing out ABS-CBN's early history will surely learn a lot from Tita and Nikki's recollections. The last time we talked to them, they remembered—everything!

Century of (Bob) Hope

BOB HOPE died quite a number of weeks ago, but we still keep receiving questions about the highlights of his long (100 years!) life and career. Some key elements:

Hope played many characters on TV and in the movies, but his signature screen persona was the sassy but lovable smart aleck.

As for his signature song, it was the popular and wistful "Thanks for the Memory," which he introduced in "The Big Broadcast," way back in 1938.

People liked his scathing kind of comedy because it was directed less at others, humility that contradicted the braggadocio that characterized his performances, and made him more accessible to millions of viewers. He became, in short, an everyman for everyone, and a friend.

Hope started out—and ended—as a solo performer, but he did forge a hit screen partnership with **Bing Crosby** for quite a number of years. Their series of "Road" movies clicked with viewers because the two stars were different, and yet worked well with each other.

In fact, they became so attuned to each other's "wavelength" that they sometimes ad-libbed entire scenes, and yet the result was so smooth that they looked and sounded scripted.

Hope and Crosby were just having fun with their "Road" movies, but they made the format so popular that some film observers say it spawned successive generations of "buddy" films, all the way up to the "Lethal Weapon" and "Men in Black" movies.

Despite his big-screen successes, however, most viewers remember Hope more for his long stint on TV, his being tapped to emcee so many Academy Awards ceremonies—and for his courageous entertainment sorties to war fronts all over the world, to perform for US soldiers, especially during the Christmas season.

Having lived a full 100 years, Bob's lifetime may be called "a century of Hope," making the well-loved comic truly one of a kind.

No wonder **Woody Allen,** who's no slouch as a comedian himself, regards Hope as one of the five best comics who ever worked in the movies.

For his part, critic **Richard Schickel** cites Hope's ack-ack delivery of jokes as his best comedic suit. Well, each Hope admirer has his own favorite among the comedian's many routines. Bob Hope delighted so many people for so long that his act will-continue to be hard to beat.

"MAYNILA sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag," by Lino Brocka, starring Bembol Roco and Hilda Koronel

We'll keep coming back to Hotdog

SHOW TIME

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

JUST like most revolutionary ideas, the music of Hotdog will never die; it will just have different reincarnations.

In a TV commercial, for example, a middle-aged woman, on the phone in a foreign country, shamelessly belts out the Hotdog classic "Manila." Soon, we'll be hearing Jolina Magdangal singing her own version of the group's "Annie Batungbakal" as she promotes her new movie of the same title.

A few years ago, popular bands like the Eraserheads and Parokya ni Edgar recorded one Hotdog song each in an album meant to honor one of the most productive and recognizable bands of all time. And more artists will do covers of the about 25 Hotdog hits.

Still, nobody can do what the Hotdog has done since 1974, when their first hit, "Ikaw ang Miss Universe ng Buhay Ko" burned the airwaves. The band was able to blend witty, topical lyrics with very distinct melody, resulting in unique musical gems.

The story behind the music is more interesting. This we found out from Hotdog's main man, Rene Garcia.

How does he compare the band scene during Hotdog's time and now?

"The bands were experimental then, *walang ginagaya,*" says Garcia. "Now, the bands are trying to call it alternative, but actually *ang mga* influences *nila iba-iba rin. Iba 'pag galing sa 'yo.* There doesn't have to be a term to call it.

"Not everybody was accepted to do an original sound then. So it was a big gamble on our part, my brother Dennis and I, to come up with an original sound. We wanted to try something new and change the attitude so that it would also be accepted by the A-B crowd, and not just by the C-D."

Proud parents

And how did the people react to their original sound?

"It was unexpected. Our first song, 'Ikaw ang Miss Universe ng Buhay Ko,' was released in time for the Miss Universe pageant (Manila, 1974). Our next was 'Pers Lab.' We were surprised that our music was appreciated by everybody. On our first year as a band, we won an award, we had a movie, 'Unang Kagat.'"

"Even our parents were proud of us. *Bihira kasi 'yan* when you're a rock star or you're in a band. Usually, the parents don't like it because it's noisy. But when we decided to do Tagalog songs, *naging mas* close *kami sa* family, so that was something different. *Hindi mabibili 'yun.*"

What is Hotdog's biggest contribution to Philippine music?

"It's that we were able to show everybody, especially to composers, that if other nationalities could do it, so could we. We paved the way for a lot of new composers. I guess now you can actually raise a family by making good songs. *Dati kasi hindi,* unheard of *'yun.*"

When did the band feel that it was the end of the Hotdog era?

"It never ended. We just took the back seat because we were busy with other chores, like advertising, doing commercials, which are my real bread and butter.

"The original drummer, Jess Garcia, is now the vice president for marketing of Philippine Airlines. The original keyboard player, Lorrie Illustre, is a composer and an arranger. We were four guys and one girl then. *Parating* five *para madali* when we travel abroad, five visas *na lang.*

Playing on

"We never broke up. (When we were starting out) it was clear that we could do what we wanted during the day and meet at night so we could perform together. OK *na* arrangement. We were 19 years old when we started, *bata pa kami, kaya ang nangyari* we also had our day jobs."

"We didn't really stop playing. When Dennis and I went to the States in '86 and lived there for eight years, we lay low. When I came back, the band started playing again. We also produced other artists' records. In 1993, I worked on the album of the UMD (Universal Motion Dancers). We were also doing a lot of songs like Anna Fegi's 'Saan Ka na Ngayon.'"

"Basically, Hotdog has always been Dennis and me. He sings all the songs. But now he's semi-retired from performing live. He prefers to be a lyricist. He works as a copywriter. He'll be watching our show with the Apo at Onstage on Aug. 28. I'll be acknowledging him."

Musicians forever

Playing with the Hotdog now are Willie Lopez (keyboards), Guy Papasin (drums) and Bob Repulda (bass).

The band's first female singer was Ella del Rosario, followed by Gina Montes, Maso Diez, Zsa Zsa Padilla, and then Maso again. Today, the band has Nadia Moore, who used to sing in lounges like the Calesa Bar."

How does the band connect with today's music fans?

"The most we can do is to write songs for new singers," says Garcia. "It doesn't always have to be us in the frontline. We'll always be composers and musicians."

"Basically the mothers and fathers bring their sons and daughters to our shows. They tell their kids: That's our music. And the kids appreciate it because *uso naman ang* retro."

"We're honored that people remember us through our songs. *Iba 'yan, 'di nabibili.* Not everybody can come up with a song that people will hum for years. *Sarap ng* feeling."

BAND'S STAND. "We'll always be composers and musicians," says Garcia (second from right) with current co-members Moore, Lopez, Papasin and Repulda.

Rene Requiestas story on 'Maalaala'

HE MADE us laugh in movies like "Starzan," "Pido Dida," "Elvis and James," "Ilong Ranger and Tonton," and many more of the biggest comedy hits of the early '90s. Indeed, it's hard to believe that it's been 10 years since funnyman Rene Requiestas died suddenly on July 24, 1993 and made the world less funny.

ABS-CBN tells the true story of one of the most unforgettably funny people in Philippine entertainment as it features another comedian, Long Mejia, in "The Rene Requiestas Story" tonight on "Maalaala Mo Kaya."

Rene was an unforgettable presence with his large eyes, gap-toothed smile and impeccable comic timing. But decades before the rest of the country actually met Rene the comedian, he was a struggling theater actor from UP who had his heart set on becoming a serious actor. Poverty was his biggest hurdle, and he had to work as a messenger and construction worker to support his brothers and sisters even while he looked for acting jobs.

He eventually caught the attention of directors Ishmael Bernal, Behn Cervantes, Tony Espejo, Bien Lumbera, Tony Mabesa and Marilou Diaz-Abaya. The latter gave him his first break as a member of the cast of the satirical "Sic O'Clock News" on television.

His biggest break, however, came from comedian Joey de Leon, who fought to have Rene included in "She-Man." That movie broke records by earning P100 million in its run. Their next film, "Starzan," was an even bigger hit, and Joey and Rene were on their way to being the unbeatable comedy team of late '80s and '90s.

Rene was hand-picked to be the first-ever leading man of presidential daughter Kris Aquino in the smash "Pido Dida."

But what demons haunted Rene even after he became a box-office success? And what caused his sudden death at 37?

Long, who portrays Rene, also came from very humble beginnings. Like Rene was to Joey, Long is also a scene-stealing sidekick, to comedy king Dolphy in "Home Along da Airport."

Charo Santos-Concio hosts "Maalaala Mo Kaya," which airs right after ABS-CBN's Teleserye Primetime Bida.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

Dolly Ann is on leave.

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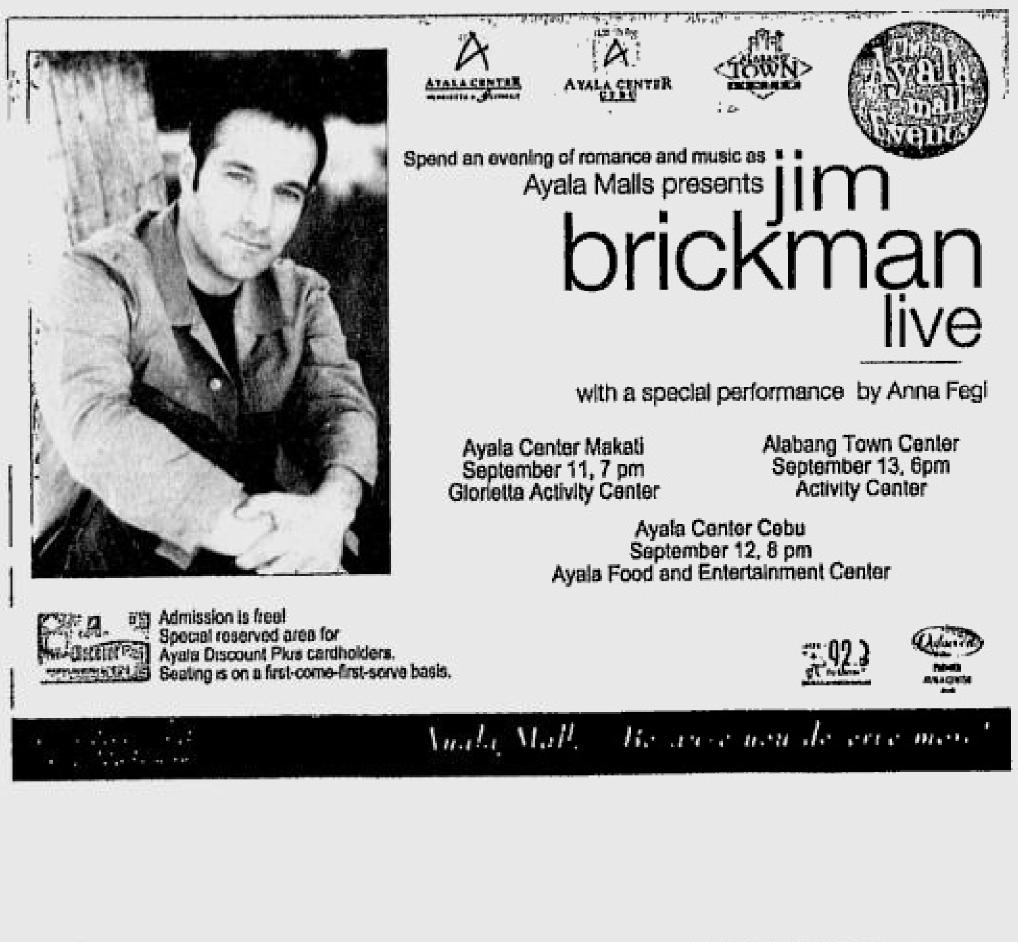

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Ali 1	KEKA
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Ali 3	SPY KIDS 3
Ali 4	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
Ali 5	ITALIAN JOB
Ali 6	FINDING NEMO
Ali 7	LXG

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AUG 28	UAAP GAMES : UP VS. DLSU
AUG 30	UAAP GAMES : FEU VS. UE
SEPT 1	NCA 7-STAG DERBY
SEPT 3	NCA 7-STAG DERBY
SEPT 4	UAAP GAMES : ADMU VS. UST
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The Spa at the Alabang Town Center has regular celebrity clients. Show biz couple Bong Revilla Jr. and Lani Mercado usually go there on weekends for their regular massage. Another couple, Franco Laurel and Ayen Munji, also go to The Spa for their facial treatment. Troy Montero gets his rubdown there, too.

DID YOU KNOW...

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	NENA INOCENTE
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NENA INOCENTE
B	SNAKE LADY
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	NENA INOCENTE
CINEMA-3	LXG
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TOMB RAIDER 2
CINEMA-6	ALEX & EMMA
CINEMA-7	KEKA
CINEMA-8	BAD BOYS 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ITALIAN JOB
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPY KIDS 3D
CINEMA-12	WAKING UP IN RENO
CINEMA-14	FINDING NEMO
CINEMA-15	[illegible]
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
(LAS PINAS)	LXG
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	IMPOSTOR
CINEMA-4	MOTEL
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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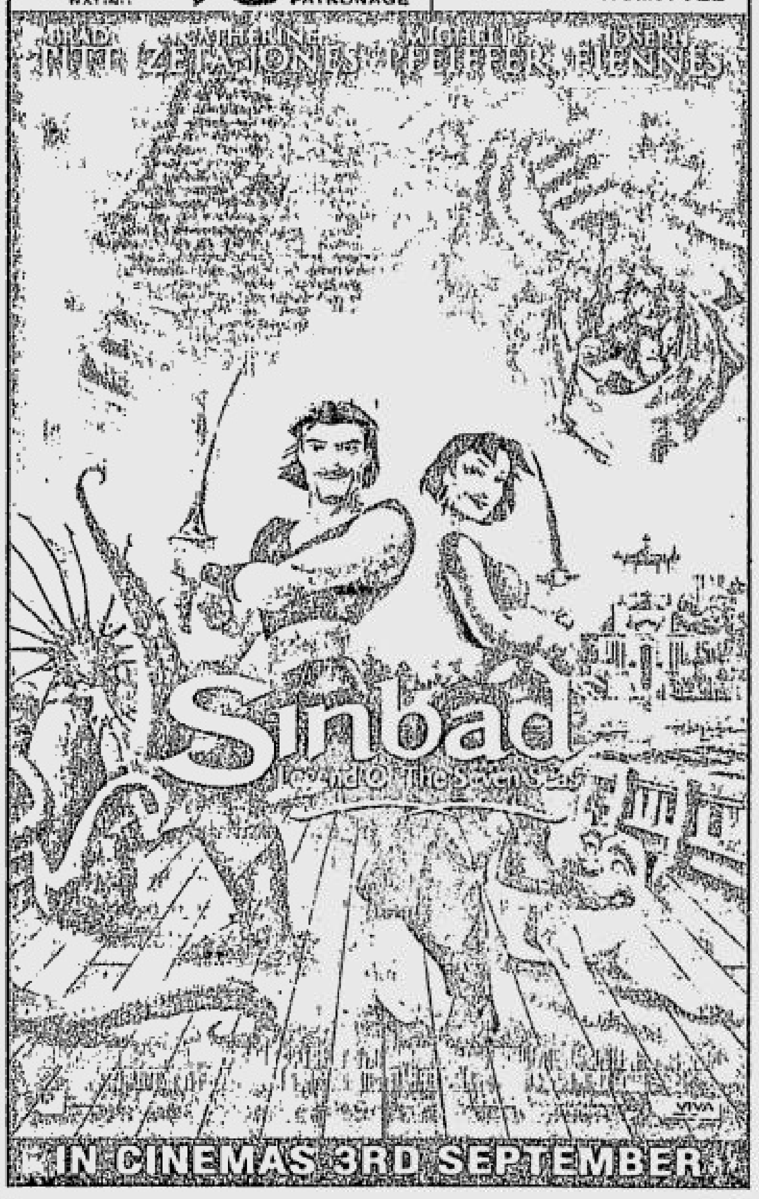

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ITALIAN JOB R13 1:10,3:25,5:40,7:55,10:10	A VIEW FROM TOP PG13 1:30,3:30,5:30,7:30,9:30	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN PG13 11:40,2:30,5:10,7:50,10:30

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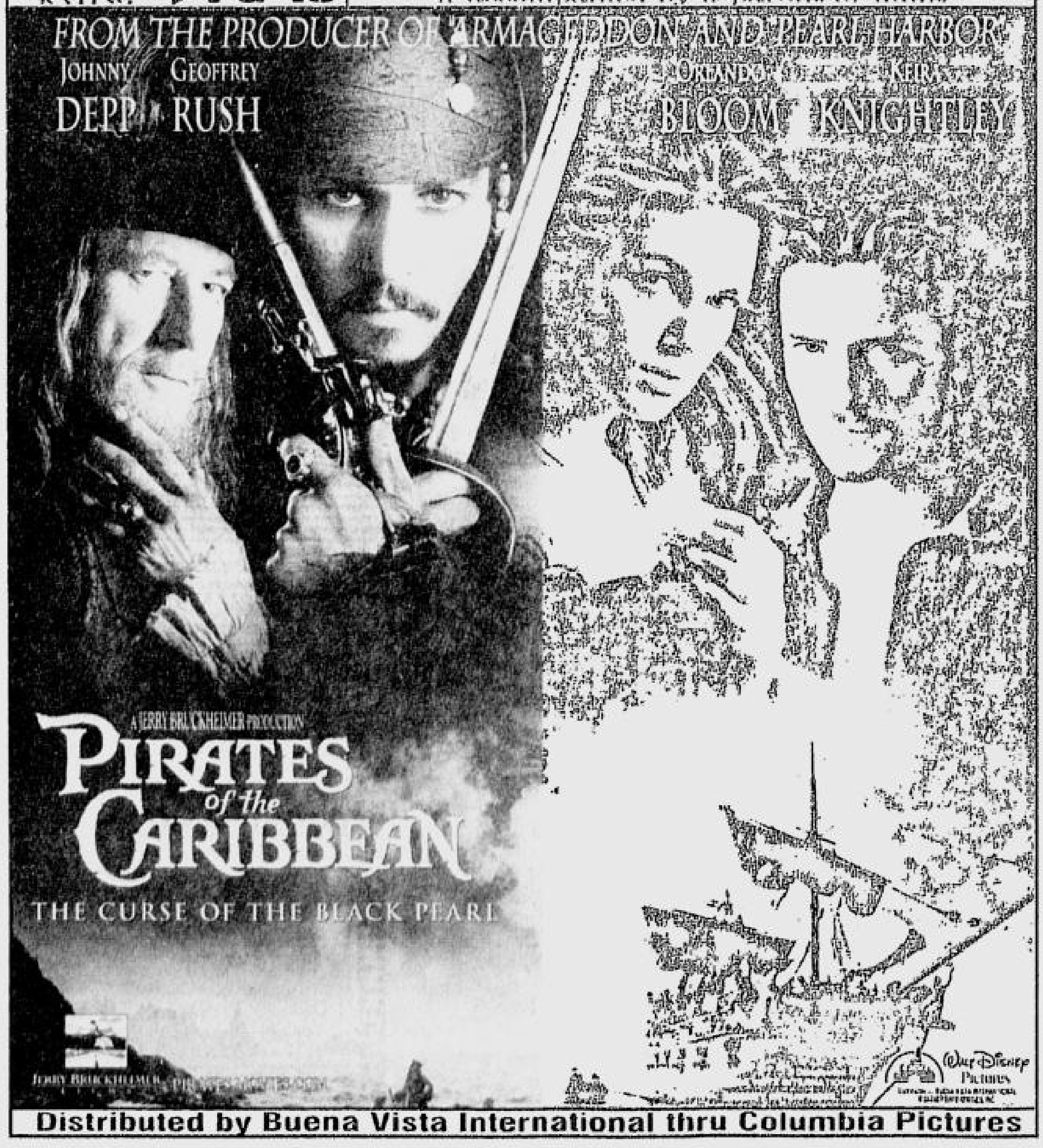
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Mayor's team to watch 'Showgirls' for 'lewd acts'

By Marinel R. Cruz

PASAY City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad has formed a monitoring team that would watch "Showgirls: A Dance Concert" on Saturday at the Folk Arts Theater for "lewd acts" that could "pollute the minds and trample the dignity of Filipinos."

The team was formed even as the producers and directors of the show featuring 12 sexy stars vowed that it would not have any lewdness at all.

Show director Calvin Neria of Cast and Crew said the producers, Live Artists Production and Red Chair Production, signed an agreement with Trinidad late last week. "The producers promised the mayor *na walang magpapakita ng kahit ano*," Neria said. "That's the real plan anyway."

The monitoring team consists of members of the mayor's staff as well as the Pasay police, said "Showgirls" director Calvin Neria of Cast and Crew.

"The mayor said he considers it unlawful to cancel the show's permit based merely on hearsay," Neria told Inquirer Entertainment on Tuesday. "That's why he said he is sending a team, whose members he personally picked, to monitor the show."

The show will feature Aubrey Miles, Jenny Miller, April Tolentino, Michelle Estevez, Cherry Lou, Angelika Jones, Priscilla Almeda, Aleck Bovick, Geneva Cruz, Michelle Bayle, Regine Tolentino and Angela Velez performing numbers inspired by movies like "Moulin Rouge," "Charlie's Angels" and "Flashdance," said Neria, who is directing the show with his Cast and Crew associate, Duds Santiago.

Neria said that because of the negative reports about "Showgirls," ticket buyers were having doubts as to whether the show would go on as scheduled.

"The girls will be performing in the show on Saturday," Neria declared. "'Showgirls' is not the cabaret show that Congressman Nepomuceno said it is. We will prove to him that this is a showcase of talents, with well-conceptualized dance numbers.

"Mayor Trinidad said the Pampanga congressman has no right to preempt the city government because Pasay is not in his jurisdiction."

Neria was referring to Pampanga Rep. Francis L. Nepomuceno, who wanted to stop the show from taking place, saying "it would only seduce people into committing sexually related crimes."

"The Pasay City government should not grant a permit for the staging of such a lewd show at Folk Arts," Nepomuceno said in a statement. "The shrewd promoter and *bomba* stars should never be allowed to continue polluting the minds and trampling the dignity of Filipinos with their highly questionable shows."

The congressman threatened to file in court a motion for permanent injunction against the producers for "engaging in the flesh trade."

He made the same threat to other similar live shows and movies with sexy stars.

Neria said the cast of "Showgirls" and Santiago were to pay a courtesy call on Nepomuceno Live Artists and Red Chair will bring "Showgirls" to other places like Baguio, Cebu, Cabanatuan as well as to Subic, according to Neria.

Menchu and Audie together again

SHOW TIME

By Louie C. Camino and Marinel R. Cruz

EARLY in their theater career, Audie Gemora and Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo played the teen lovers Rolf and Liesl in the Repertory Philippines version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Sound of Music." Several years later, Menchu and Audie played lovers again in Joseph Kesselring's "Arsenic and the Old Lace," as staged by Repertory.

Tomorrow, Menchu and Audie will be a couple again, in Jason Robert Browns' prize-winning play "The Last Five Years," at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium of RCBC Plaza on Ayala Avenue in Makati City.

The musical, which will run every Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. until Sept. 14, is directed by Bart Guingona for Actor's Actors Inc.

Menchu and Audie, both stalwarts in Philippine musical theater who deserve to be seen by a lot more people, have been lovers on stage enough number of times to be so comfortable with each other that, even during the interview, they look and sound like a couple in perfect harmony. Each knows just when it's his or her turn to respond, when to let the other talk on, when to fill the gap. They are like a seamless, pleasing melody. Which is why they were picked to play the couple in "The Last Five Years."

2 time frames

Director Bart describes the two-character musical as about a man and a woman who fall in love, get married and separate after five years. "What's interesting is, the story is presented in two entirely different perspectives, of the man and the woman. And what makes it even more interesting is that they are from two different *time frames*.

"*Nakakalito*," Bart admits. "But that's where the challenge lies. The first time I read the play, I said *nakaka-nerbiyos*. It's going to require a lot in terms of design, of conceptualization. *Mahirap*. We did a test run and the audience said they understood the concept after the first four songs. There are 16 songs in all. It dawns on you, then it become so fascinating."

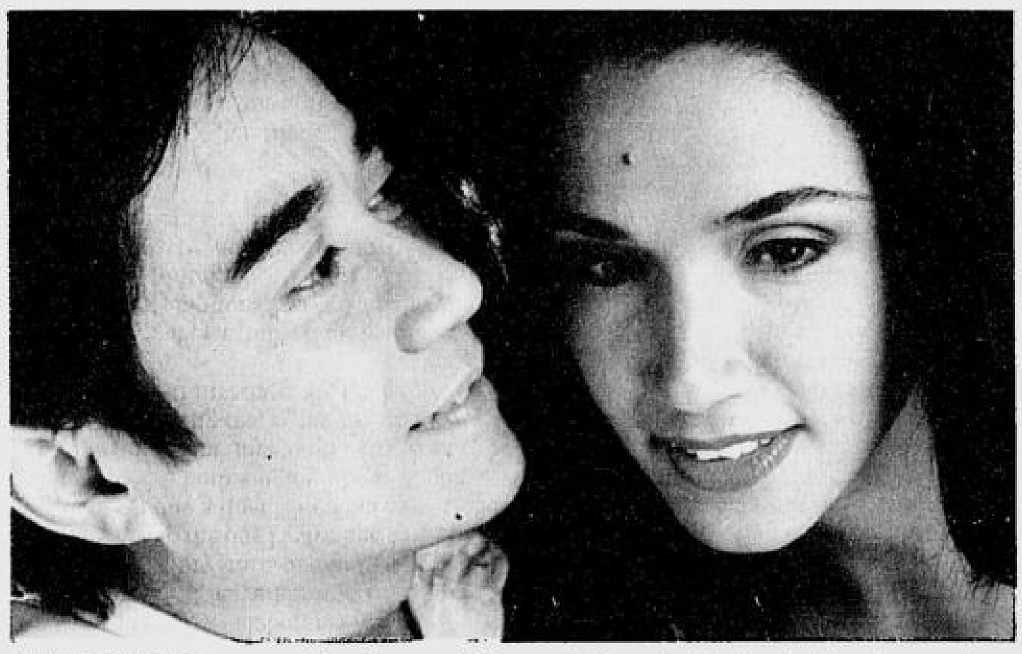
Difficult

"There is only one time when the two characters come together, during their wedding," says Audie.

"Otherwise, we don't act together," adds Menchu.

"When he sings in reference to her, she's there, at the back or in front, but they're never together," says the director. "The one who's singing is the one who's lit up. I want to see if the audience will get it.

She says he wanted to conquer the world, and did. He says she is the 'diva of Philippine musical theater'



NOT ACTING. Gemora and Lauchengco- Yulo, as photographed by her brother Raymond Lauchengco

"Directing-wise, yes, it is a difficult play. On a daily basis, I asked Menchu and Audie to fine-tune their songs. Like today, for example, I made them act separately so that we could get the dramatic flow. I kept experimenting and thinking of ways to clarify it."

Since the musical is presented from the perspectives of the husband and the wife, its ending will mean different things for each character. For the man, it ends on the day he leaves her; for the woman, it ends on the day they first meet.

"Menchu's story," elaborates Audie, "starts on the day that I leave her and ends on our first date. My story starts on our first date and goes forward to the day I leave her."

"We're singing a duet," Menchu says of the ending. "We're both singing about goodbye, with two different meanings. His goodbye means he's leaving me, while my goodbye is at the end of our first date. So, I'm happy, he's sad."

"There is never a time that we have the same level of emotions," says Audie, "except during the wedding."

"But it's nice because you get to see a lot of irony," says Bart.

Well-respected

Says Menchu, "Our friends get to understand it at different times in the play. Some would get it early, some would get it much later. But when they do get it, *tuloy-tuloy na*. But you don't have to go back and watch the play again to get it, although you might want to watch it again, thank you."

Says Audie, "When we were doing rehearsals, so we wouldn't have a hard time, we did it in chronological order. We broke down the script. We found out that it's nothing great. It's the way (playwright) Brown structured that makes it so powerful."

The play has very few spoken lines, according to Bart. "*Pamatay sa kanta*," he adds. "They have eight killer songs each that are like monologues. Acting piece *talaga*."

Menchu and Audie say that whatever happens to the characters they play on stage, they are real friends off stage. They even started in theater almost at the same time, he through "Chorus Line" in 1979 and she through "Fiddler on the Roof" in 1978.

"I'm very proud of what Audie has become," says Menchu. "I knew the young Audie and I saw him through his early twenties. He was driven, he wanted to conquer the world. He has established himself and is very well respected. He has his own theater company (Trumpets) and I see how he runs it. I think the young guy who has set out to conquer the world actually has."

Patron saint

The friends are also a mutual admiration society of two. Says Audie of Menchu, "If there's anybody you can call the 'musical theater diva,' *si* Menchu *'talaga 'yun*. Nobody can sing like her. That's why in our small world that is the musical theater, she's like the patron saint of all these young female singers who aspire to be the next Leah Salonga or Monique Wilson. When they want to get roles, they run to her for lessons. And she graciously teaches them. *Wala siyang ere.*"

"The Last Five Years" is therefore a fitting 25th year project for the two friends, even if the characters they play separate. In real life, Menchu is, says Audie, "a devoted wife and mother" of two kids, a very pretty girl who's turning 16, and an 11-year-old boy.

"I can do only one major musical a year because I have children," confirms Menchu. "When you get to be our age and feel that you've done so much already, you want to really choose what would challenge you and make you grow."

Dream roles

"In our youth," says Audie, "when we were still in Repertory, we had time to do plays one after the other. We don't have the energy now."

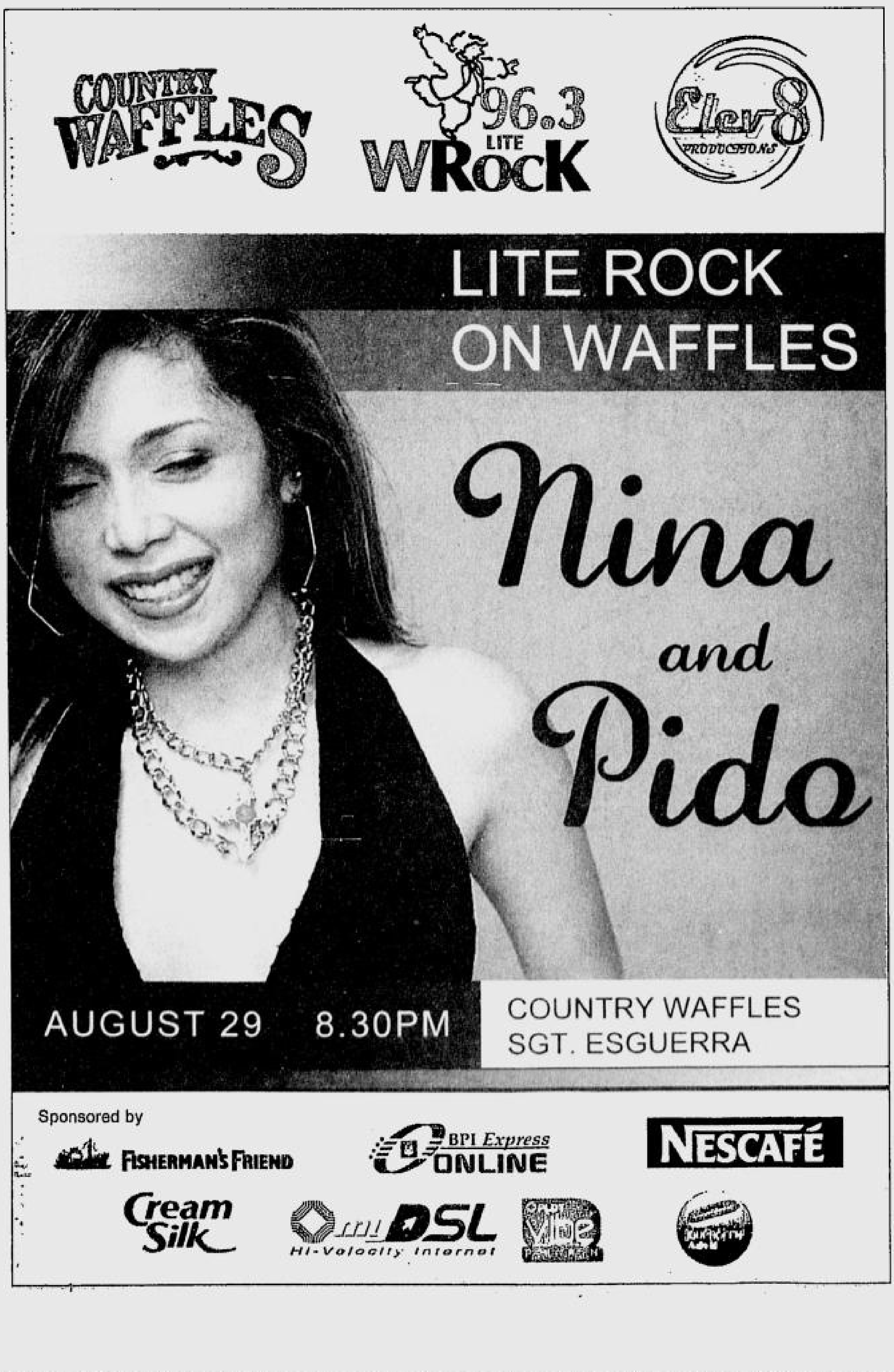
Do they still have dream roles after 25 years?

Menchu says she would love to do Stephen Sondheim's "Sunday in the Park." "I'm a Sondheim fanatic, so I'm biased. Eventually, I'd like to do 'Sunset Boulevard,' many, many years from now."

Audie's dream is "Phantom of the Opera."

"And 'Sweeney Todd' also," he adds. "It's also by Sondheim, who is the best writer of this century."

After their first 25 years, Menchu Lauchengco and Audie Gemora have proved they can dream and make it come true. We just might see them together again 25 years from now.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3D from 1838 to 'Spy Kids 3-D'

AS early as ancient Rome, artists had experimented with techniques to make paintings "pop" and tease the eye with extra depth and dimension. Then, in 1838, came a breakthrough. Physicist Charles Wheatstone created the world's first stereoscopic viewer, allowing anyone to see pictures in multiple dimensions.

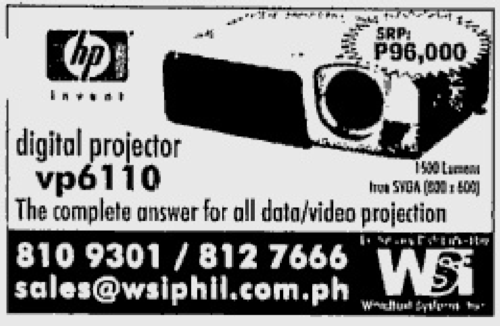
Wheatstone based his invention on the scientific reality that our left eye and our right eye see the world from slightly different angles. When we look at an object, the brain magically fuses the two images into one, allowing the viewer to understand depth and distance. Wheatstone created a special viewer that could display two different pictures from two different angles simultaneously—one image to the right eye and one image to the left. When viewed together, the two pictures created a "stereo" effect that gave the resulting image a greater sense of dimension.

In the 1950s, moviegoers flocked to three-dimensional features, often horror movies, such as "Bwana Devil" and "Creature From the Black Lagoon."

With advances in technology, 3D has experienced the start of a new renaissance.

"Filmmaking is already a visual medium, but doing it in three dimensions only makes it that much more exciting," says Robert Rodriguez, director of "Spy Kids 3-D," now showing in Metro Manila theaters. "3D is about envisioning a whole world, full of color and depth."

"Spy Kids 3-D" became the No. 1 movie in America, even outgrossing "Tomb Raider." Miramax is planning to do more 3-D movies.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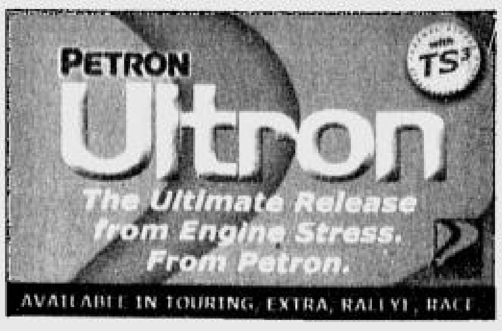
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ADB warns RP of waning investor interest

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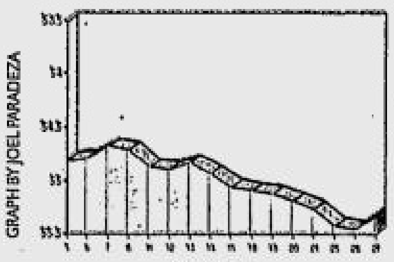

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As of 5 p.m., Aug. 27, 2003

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As of 5 p.m., Aug. 27, 2003

GOLD: $ 363.60-364.00
per ounce Hong Kong, Aug. 27, 2003

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank yesterday warned that the Philippines was facing another type of contagion—snowballing perceptions that the economy was becoming less competitive and less attractive to foreign investors.

"Uncertainty has been a persistent partner of the Philippines in recent years and seems likely to continue to influence economic performance and investor perceptions," the bank said in its latest country economic review released yesterday.

"Uncertainties exist with contenders for the Presidency in the 2004 elections and the policies that will be pursued by the new administration; the coup attempt in July 2003 injects further dimensions of uncertainty," it added.

The ADB said the attainment of the government's domestic growth

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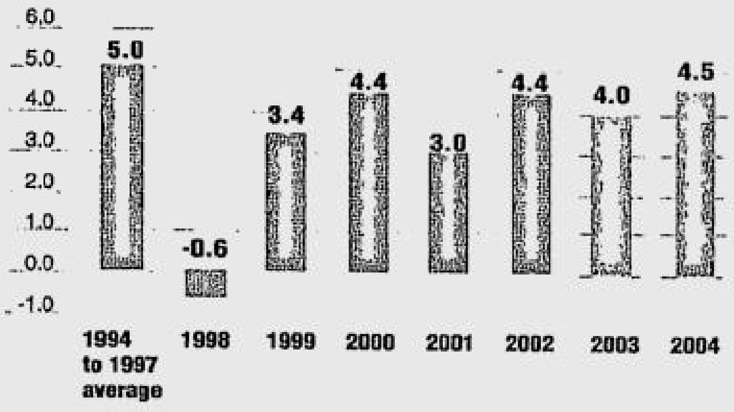

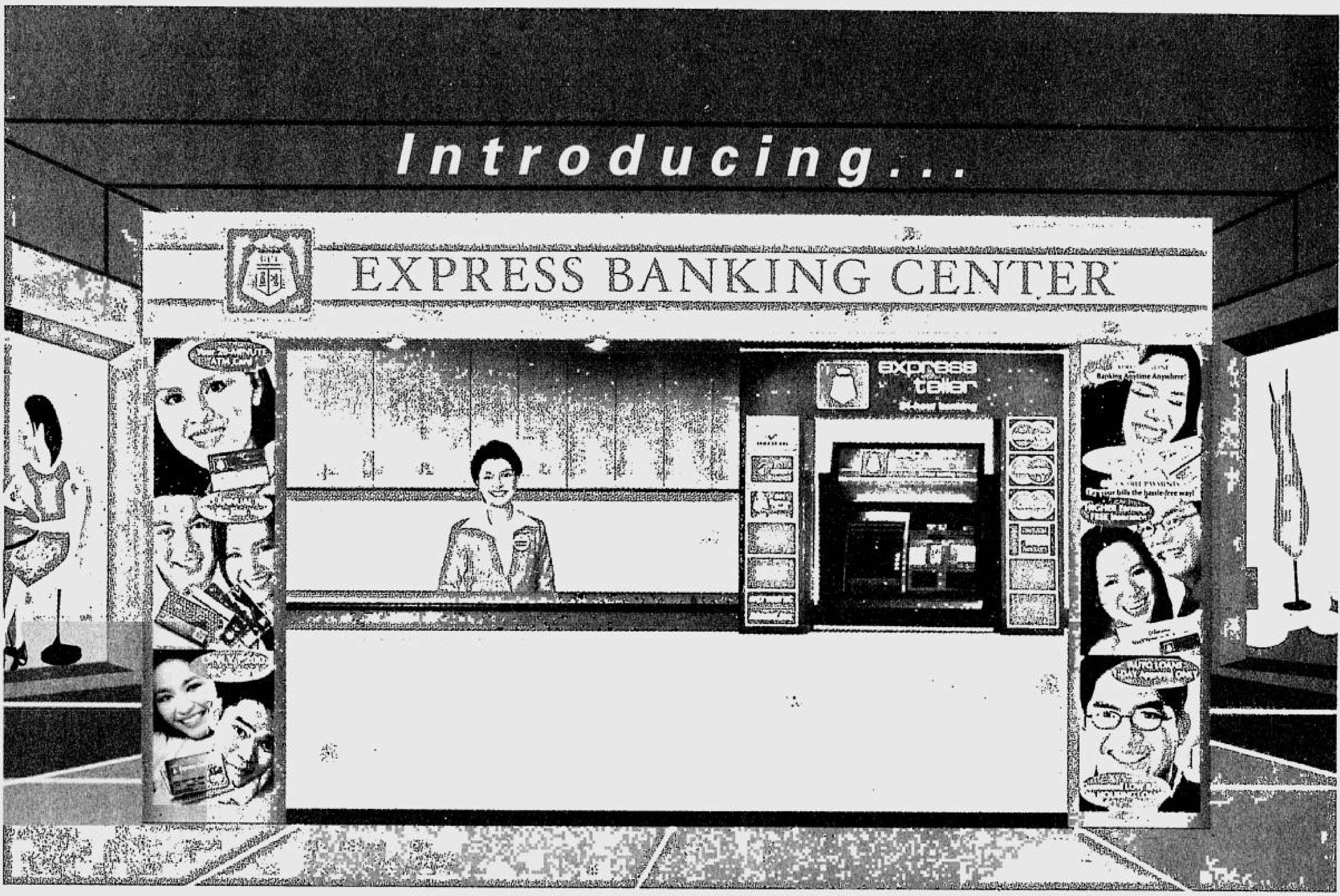

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Mike my word

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

DON'T listen to coffee shop talk. It's not true, for example, that the real "Jose Pidal" is Secretary Michael "the Favorite" Defensor.

Okay, Mike is a member of the sizeable Cabinet of this cute administration of Gloriaetta. Word goes around that he is, in fact, Gloriaetta's favorite.

But his position in the government is just like a news tabloid. You know—everything is in the big, bold screaming title.

For Mike is among the many government employees who have "Secretary" as title before their names, but who do not have their own "department."

As chair of HUDCC, or the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Mike is more popularly known as the "housing czar."

It is only right therefore that, being in that position, Mike must rescue the star witness in the Jose Pidal scandal. Clearly it is part of his housing job.

* * *

EVERYDAY many victims of street mishaps die, because they fail to make it to the hospital on time. Poor and all, this country has no helicopter for such an emergency.

The other day, when Mike the Favorite "rescued" the star witness, he could produce two—not one but two—helicopters. They came from … well, Malacañang.

And then he goes on record, telling the public with a poker face, mark my word, Malacañang had nothing to do with the damn thing.

Sure, I can believe Mike the Favorite, in the same way I can believe that the peso is getting crushed in the forex market because mankind is depleting the ozone layer.

Let me see—so our government lends multimillion-peso helicopters to Cabinet members anytime they try to do something which is not part of their job—is that it?

* * *

MOREOVER, Mike the Favorite had to carry out all that commando-like operation, using our tax money, because of one and one thing alone.

And that is, and this is based on word from Malacañang, Gloriaetta's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo does not really own the huge bank accounts of "Jose Pidal."

Signature experts of the PNP and the NBI already said that the signature of Jose Pidal was not made by Mike Arroyo.

So this cute administration have nothing to worry about, and that is why Malacañang does not intrude in any rescue operation.

Again, let us make it clear, the husband of Gloriaetta is not Jose Pidal! Look, we even have the word of the PNP and the NBI on it.

And so people wonder what unthinkably audacious things this cute administration will be forced to do, if the owner of the bank accounts is actually Mike the Husband.

* * *

THERE'S much ado among a lot of government guys like Mike the Favorite over something which, they claim themselves, does not stand a chance in court.

Oops, sorry, we don't even have a court case yet. At the moment, the only forthcoming media event on the Jose Pidal scandal is the Senate investigation.

Now, the star witness already executed an affidavit, saying the Jose Pidal is really Mike the Husband.

After he was "rescued," we can presume that he will change his mind, if and when he faces the senators in the investigation in aid of … well, whatever.

In which the star witness is lying, whether in the affidavit or in his oral testimony in the hearing, I'm afraid that not all the senators can tell the difference.

In the august body we still have guys like Nardong Putik, Jawo, Tito without Vic and Joey, news readers, Mr. Vilma … este, Ralph.

* * *

IF Mike the Favorite is good at doing things which are not part of his job, maybe Gloriaetta should move him to another position.

Aside from that rescue operation without the blessing of Malacañang, he also figured prominently in the recent failed coup d' etat.

It is turning out that Mike the Favorite can accomplish a lot of things as long as they have nothing to do with housing whatsoever.

I have yet to see this cute administration launch its own housing program. Just how many shelter units it has built so far, is still an unclassified state secret.

Business people, in fact, are saying that the government cannot make a go at housing, because in a demanding job, Gloriaetta put a guy who is too inexperienced.

What has Mike the Favorite done in his life, except win elections? Okay, as a congressman, he also put his finger in every issue in the House of Representatives.

* * *

THAT'S where I heard he is going back—to Congress. Mike the Favorite is said to be running for a congressional seat in the second district of Quezon City.

Word also goes around that he will probably be up against a senator who is taking a rest from the hectic Senate by going to the House. Hint—"without Vic and Joey."

It is likely going to be a three-cornered fight. Another possible candidate for the same seat is basketball coach Franz Pumaren.

I honestly think that Franz is really the right guy for the job, but he does not have the support of Malacañang like Mike the Favorite.

Moreover, if I still know the guy, Franz does not have money to burn.

It so happens that I know that somebody else has people going around in the business community, looking for deals for their boss.

* * *

THAT "rescued" star witness in the Jose Pidal scandal said in his affidavit that Piatco guys supposedly delivered money to … well, you know who.

Piatco is the famous operator of the controversial Naia Terminal 3 which the Supreme Court said does not have a valid contract.

So what do we do now? Only 80 kilometers away from Metro Manila, in a 33,000-hectare prime land, is the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport.

That's in the former US military base called Clark, which Clark Development Corp. wants to develop into what they call an "aerotropolis."

Frankly, the DMIA can become our premier airport in the next 10 years, and the main reason behind its potential is its huge land area, which is mostly open space.

It already has two runways, each 3.2 km long, built by the US military, meaning, they were done well. You know—unlike our roads!

* * *

COMMERCIAL flights already started at the DMIA, starting with domestic flights of Cebu Pacific, Asian Spirit, and Sea Air. Also, UPS uses DMIA as its Asian hub.

But what I love about the whole thing is the concept of a large economic zone around the airport, going beyond the fence of the former military base.

Several towns around it already organized themselves into an advisory body, which prepares their communities for the so-called aerotropolis.

Working together with CDC president and CEO Emmanuel Angeles, the body (known as Metro Clark Advisory Council) already did several projects.

For instance, they already finished several drainage projects in all the towns around the zone. And I mean, ALL!

In the first half of the year, no wonder, CDC received investment commitments from 30 companies worth almost P1 billion. There is hope!

FOREX CONCERNS TOO

Stocks fall on political worries

STOCKS ended lower yesterday as political and foreign exchange jitters prompted investors to continue offloading large caps.

But traders added that the steadying of the peso following comments from government officials could stem the selling today.

The market's main index ended down 5.94 points, or 0.48 percent at 1,242.91 points, on moderate turnover of P491.5 million. This was up from Tuesday's turnover of P398.05 million.

So far this year, the index is up 22 percent.

Losses were led by the Ayala and Lopez group firms, while a strong rebound in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. helped cushion the fall.

"I think the market fall is linked to politicking, and the allegations of Sen. Panfilo Lacson. It just compounds the impression of investors that Filipino politics is dodgy," said Unicapital Securities head of research Elena Ponceca.

Senator Lacson has accused Jose Miguel Arroyo, husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo, of money laundering.

Traders added that news reports of soldiers and police gathering at a Catholic shrine in Manila to prevent a feared rally by supporters of former President Joseph Estrada or opposition Sen. Gregorio Honasan also weighed on sentiment.

Estrada is in jail on plunder and other charges after being ousted in an Army-backed popular revolt in 2001. Honasan is in hiding, fearing government blame for last month's failed military uprising.

A sharp rebound in the peso after President Macapagal warned that the central bank would clamp down hard on currency speculation helped moderate market losses.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho told reporters that the unit was undervalued at its current level and its weakness was the temporary result of "political noise." The comments helped the peso strengthen to 55.17 to $1 by the noon trading break after sliding as low as 55.60 on Tuesday, perilously close to its all-time low of 55.75 touched in January 2001 when Estrada was ejected from office.

"Barring any fresh negative political developments we may shift back into sideways trading again on Thursday," Ponceca said.

Lopez family-related companies continued to weaken, as investors pocketed gains made in recent weeks. Manila Electric Co B-shares , traded by foreign and local investors, fell 1.1 percent to P21.5 although the A-shares open to locals strengthened, rising 1.8 percent to P13.50.

First Philippine Holdings, which controls the power generating assets of the Lopezes, fell 2.7 percent to P17.7 while broadcasting giant ABS-CBN slipped 3.8 percent to P25.

Ayala group stocks that had helped drive the market up this year came under selling pressure as investors cashed in gains.

Bank of the Philippine Islands fell 3.3 percent to P43 while Ayala Corp fell 1.1 percent to P4.4.

Philippines Long Distance Telephone Co., the country's largest telecom firm, helped peg back the broad market losses, rising 2.8 percent to P550 on top turnover of P118.7 million.

Reuters

WG&A to absorb operations of Cebu Ferries

SHIPPING giant William Gothong & Aboitiz Inc. is set to absorb the operations of wholly owned subsidiary Cebu Ferries Corp. to improve operational efficiency.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, WG&A spokesperson Susan Valdez said the company's board had agreed to transfer to absorb the shipping operations of CFC, which currently operates five vessels chartered from WG&A.

"On or before Nov. 1, 2003, these same vessels will be directly operated by WG&A," Valdez said.

CFC provides inter-island shipping services across a network of ports in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The Aboitiz group, which increased its stake in WG&A to more than 90 percent by buying out the holdings held by the Gothong and Chiongbian families, is considering consolidating all its transport-related businesses under WG&A.

The family's holding firm, Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., is spending over P2 billion to expand its transportation businesses this year, bulk of which will fund the fleet modernization program of WG&A. The other transportation-related businesses of AEV are Aboitiz One and fast-craft or Supercat operator Philippine Fast Ferry Corp. *Doris C. Dumlao*

RP judicial reform program gets $22-M World Bank loan

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD Bank has approved a fresh $21.9-million loan to help the Philippines implement a judicial reform program that was initiated by the Supreme Court.

The Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP) seeks to address chronic problems in the Philippine judiciary such as delays in the delivery of justice, corruption, weak administrative structures, outdated technology and deficient facilities, and underdeveloped human resources, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

"The JRSP will assist the Philippines in developing a more effective and accessible judicial system that would foster public trust and confidence," the bank said.

Quoting project proponent Chief Justice Hilario Davide, the bank said JRSP would "support the implementation of the (high) court's action program for judicial reform and thus the pursuit of our vision for a Judiciary that is independent, effective and efficient, and worthy of public trust and confidence."

Specifically, the bank said the JRSP would assist in:

- improving court efficiency and access to justice;
- promoting the integrity of the judiciary;
- upgrading institutional capability; and,
- deepening stakeholder support for sustained judicial reform.

The bank said these would be achieved by implementing institutional reforms that should improve court and case management, establishing pilot mobile courts, installing comprehensive computer-based financial and administrative systems, improving information and communication systems, strengthening feedback mechanisms for judicial performance, implementing a human resource development plan for non-judicial personnel, decentralizing administration, establishing pilot modern courts, and, strengthening research.

"The pilot model courts will be spread across the three main geographic regions of the country—Luzon, Mindanao and Visayas," the bank said.

INTEREST RATES

August 27, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 27-Aug-03	MART1 26-Aug-03
1 Month	5.9115	5.8615
3 Months	6.0217	6.0071
6 Months	6.5231	6.4625
1 Year	8.0983	8.0696
2 Years	9.7357	9.7267
3 Years	10.39	10.3857
4 Years	10.7446	10.75
5 Years	11.0304	11.0339
7 Years	11.5617	11.55
10 Years	11.8767	11.8533
20 Years	12.2017	12.1783
25 Years	12.4917	12.4683

SOURCE . MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 27, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	83,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	44.5	43	43	1,837,700
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	1,610
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34	34	34	407,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31.5	31.5	30	30	123,100
Philippine National Bank	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	6,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.25	13	13	38,200
Security Bank Corp.	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	46,600
Union Bank of the Phil	26	26	26	26	58,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1655	1640	1655	2,930
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.3	1.3	2,224,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1190	1215	1190	1215	4,380
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	26	26	25	25	196,500
Diversified Fin. Network	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.62	4,080,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	630	635	630	630	74,700
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	8,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	8,400,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	1,200,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	545	555	545	550	215,590
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	41,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	13.25	13.75	13.25	13.5	440,300
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	22	21.5	21.5	1,454,400
Petron Corp.	2	2	1.98	2	712,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.86	2.22	1.86	2.2	325,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	3,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.9	2.9	2.75	2.75	627,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	130,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	150,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29	29	29	29	62,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.25	274,200
San Miguel Corp. A	54	55	54	55	50,700
San Miguel Corp. B	63	64	63	64	36,200
Universal Robina Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	140,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
Ayala Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.4	4.45	3,050,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.034	4,100,000
APC Group Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.0575	0.0575	2,900,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	122,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.61	0.59	0.59	18,080,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	120,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	130,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	18.5	18.75	17.75	17.75	1,177,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.115	550,000
Ionics Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	150,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	411,000
Keppel Holdings	1	1	1	1	20,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	20,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.012	0.015	0.012	0.015	5,700,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.91	6,380,000
Music Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	830,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.25	0.25	3,680,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	240,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3	3	3	3	1,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	12,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	5,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.14	110,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	10,400
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.54	2,270,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	26.5	26.5	25	25	303,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	0.0012	20,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.4	1,992,000
Cebu Holdings Inc	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	650,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
Empire East Land Inc	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	4,760,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	10,677,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.15	0.15	240,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	9,799,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	350,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	10,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	400,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	150,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	7,000,000
	SHARES				**VALUE(P)**
Bank & Fin Svc.	4,833,920				115,711,980.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	260,759,990				293,963,930.00
PRO	28,538,000				81,405,730.00
Mining	10,370,000				116,850.00
OIL	7,550,000				116,700.00
SME	4,000				10,000.00
GRAND TOTALS	312,055,910				491,325,190.00
	AVERAGES				
Bank & Fin Svc.	437.37				DOWN 10.67
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,792.98				UP 0.01
PRO	551.91				UP 1.02
Mining	1,261.17				DOWN 10.97
OIL	1.39				UP 0.01
SME	100.00				UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	792.24				UP 10.34
Composite	1,242.91				DOWN 5.94

NO. OF ADVANCES: 17, NO. OF DECLINES: 29, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 46, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES 92, NO. OF TRADES: 2,058

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **Highlands Prime Inc.** were Henry Sy Sr., Antonio Henson, Willy Ocier, Hans Sy, Gregorio Kilayko, Washington Sycip, Rogelio Cabunag, Henry Sy Jr. and Jacinto Ng Jr.

* * *

SALCON Power Corp. declared a cash dividend of P0.45 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Sept. 12, payable on Sept. 26.

* * *

MIC Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 30, 10 a.m. at the 8/F of DPC Place, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Aug. 15 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

LORENZO Shipping Corp.'s new address is Pier 6 & 10, North Harbor, Tondo, Manila.

* * *

VIVANT Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 25, 10 a.m. at Salas 2, 4 and 6 of Montebello Villa Hotel, Banilad, Cebu City. Stockholders of record as of Aug. 31 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

EFFECTIVE Sept. 16, **Crown Equities Inc.**'s new address will be 12/F Equitable Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

August 27, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.919879	1.000000	55.532000
Japan	Yen	0.007841	0.008524	0.473400
United Kingdom	Pound	1.444117	1.569900	87.179700
Hongkong	Dollar	0.117950	0.128223	7.120500
Switzerland	Franc	0.652072	0.708868	39.364900
Canada	Dollar	0.660406	0.717927	39.867900
Singapore	Dollar	0.524386	0.570060	31.656600
Australia	Dollar	0.594352	0.646120	35.880300
Bahrain	Dinar'	2.440190	2.652731	147.311500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.245295	0.266660	14.808200
Brunei	Dollar	0.522896	0.568440	31.566600
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000118	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.022252	0.024190	1.343300
UAE	Dirham	0.250464	0.272279	15.120200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.087100	60.368800
ArgentinaPeso	0.315027	0.342466	19.017800	
Brazil	Real	0.307858	0.334672	18.585000
Denmark	Kroner	0.134591	0.146314	8.125100
India	Rupee	0.020094	0.021844	1.213000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.242106	0.263193	14.615600
Mexico	New Peso	0.084030	0.091349	5.072800
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531231	0.577501	32.069800
Norway	Kroner	0.119959	0.130407	7.241800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015914	0.017300	0.960700
South Africa	Rand	0.125581	0.136519	7.581200
Korea	Won	0.000786	0.000855	0.047500
Sweden	Kroner	0.107749	0.117134	6.504700
Syria	Pound	0.021902	0.023810	1.322200
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026976	0.029326	1.628500
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000577	0.000627	0.034800

2nd quarter economic growth seen below target

By Clarissa S. Batino

ECONOMIC growth in the second quarter may have slowed down to less than 3.7 percent following the sluggish farm sector output and the adverse effects of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak and the El Niño phenomenon.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri yesterday said the growth in gross domestic product in the second quarter could fall below the 3.7-4.4-percent target for the period.

The National Economic and Development Authority already factored in the impact of the El Niño on agricultural production when it made the estimates, according to Neri.

"Poor agriculture growth in the second quarter may make it lower than the target," Neri said in an interview.

The Neda would announce the actual GDP growth figures today. Last year, the economy grew by only 4.1 percent from January to April and by 4.5 percent in the previous quarter.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho noted, however, that despite the drags in the second quarter, the government would still meet its full-year GDP target of 4.2-5.2 percent.

"But we expect a recovery in crop performance during the third quarter," Neri added.

Farm output was battered by strong typhoons during the second quarter. As a result, growth in agriculture slowed down to 1.5 percent from 2.9 percent in the first three months. From 3.22 percent in the first half of 2002, farm output slowed down to 2.4 percent during the same period this year.

Neri said he was confident that an improving global economy should benefit Philippine exports and the manufacturing sector by the second half.

The Neda director general said the first-half performance was lackluster given the slowdown in the economies of major trading partners during the period.

"We saw the tail-end effect of SARS on our trading partners during the second quarter. There was also a slowdown in the US economy and these factors affected our trade and manufacturing," Neri said.

To meet the low-end of the 4.2-5.2 percent GDP target, Neri said GDP growth should be at least 4.5 percent in the second half.

Last year's performance exceeded the government's target of expanding the GDP by between 4 and 4.5 percent while inflation dropped to a 15-year low of 2.5 percent in December and pulled down the full-year average to 3.1 percent against a target of 4.5-5.5 percent.

Neri earlier said the government must help spur growth using other strategies like attracting more investments and accelerating the use of overseas development assistance or ODA funds.

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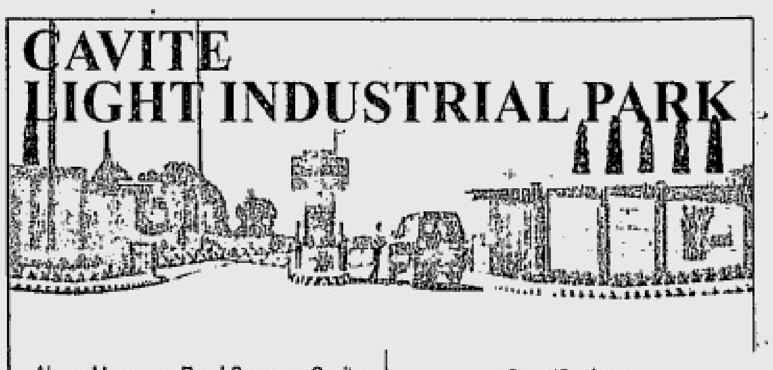

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ADB warns RP of waning investor interest

From page B1

target of 4 percent for this year and 4.5 percent for next year would depend on the pace of economic reforms, a favorable global economy and avoidance of further shocks.

"The Philippines' success in managing the potential damage from the SARS epidemic and its balanced approach to the July coup attempt, demonstrated the country's increased capacity in responding to unexpected shocks," the ADB said in the report.

However, the bank and the resilience of the economy would continue to be tested over the next couple of years as the global economic outlook remained subdued, the government was still grappling with the budget deficit problem and the nation was absorbed on the forthcoming presidential elections.

"Foreign chambers of commerce located in Manila have highlighted the urgent need to address weaknesses in the investment climate, declining proficiency in English (cited as an important source of competitive advantage), corruption and inadequate infrastructure, and to improve security," the bank said.

The ADB noted that the Philippines had slipped in its ranking for corruption (in a survey by Transparency International); competitiveness (study by the World Economic Forum) and foreign direct investment (UNCTAD World Investment Report).

The bank likewise noted the downgrade by Standard & Poor's as well as Moody's of the country's long-term sovereign credit rating as well as the 12-month cure period by California Public Employees Retirement System as an investment market.

It also warned that the ballooning budget deficits were threatening the country's economic stability.

"While there are indications that the government would arrest the five-year slide in budget deficits this year, fiscal imbalance is still the Achilles' heel of the economy and its management has become the primary barometer for assessing the government's ability—and its credibility—to deliver on its wider economic program," the bank said.

Since 1998, the bank said the increasingly high deficits have been cushioned by record-low domestic interest rates, a liquid banking sector, subdued demand for credit from the private sector and good access to international capital markets.

However, it said the deficits were imposing a heavy toll on broader economic and social objectives, as evidenced by a growing budget share (29 percent for 2003) for debt service, less optimistic assessments by international credit rating agencies and fund managers as well as greater pressure on resource allocation for priority projects.

"The solution lies mostly in enhancing tax revenues, which continued to erode in 2002, forcing the government into containing the deficits slide rather than progressing on its reduction," the ADB said.

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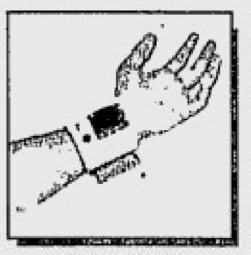

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INVITATION TO LAW PRACTITIONERS

Law practitioners are hereby invited to the launching of the Association of Philippine Professional Paralegals on August 29. 2003 (Friday), starting at 6:30 P.M., at the Gabaldon Hall of Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila, with Supreme Court Associate Justice Jose C. Vitug as Guest of Honor..

Those interested in attending this watershed event, please contact Ms. Aileen, Manressa or Eliza at 721-3470, 721-3452 or 724-0595

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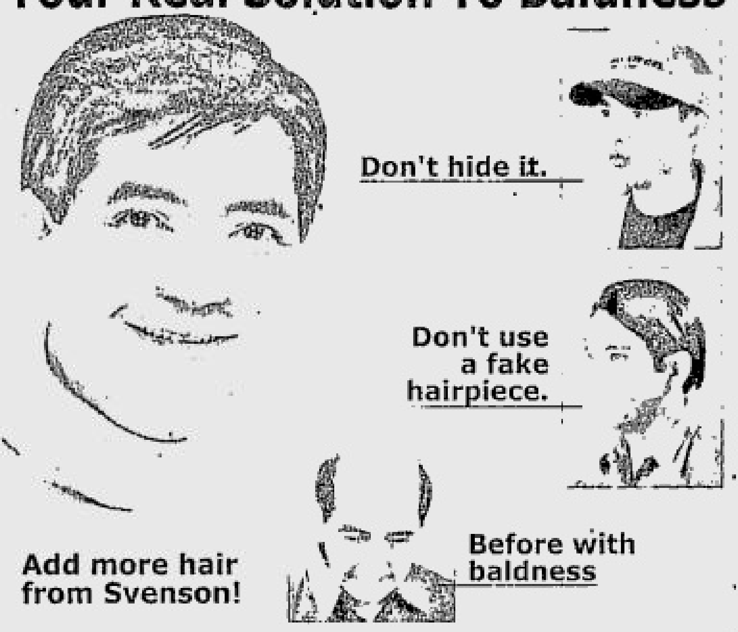

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PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN	VIEW FROM THE TOP	BEST OF CINEMANILA	THX GUARANTEED SEATS PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 1:?? 3:45 [illegible]	SPY KIDS 3D
LXG	THX GUARANTEED SEATS THE ITALIAN JOB 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30	APO HIKING SOCIETY & HOTDOG -BACK2BACK Aug 28 · 9PM	GUARANTEED SEATS FINDING NEMO 1:30 3:45 6:00 8:15 10:30	THE ITALIAN JOB
THE ITALIAN JOB	WAKING UP IN RENO		GUARANTEED SEATS TALK TO HER 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40 11:00	VIEW FROM THE TOP
	FINDING NEMO		GUARANTEED SEATS THE ITALIAN JOB 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00 11:20	FINDING NEMO
	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN			
	LXG			

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3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
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3 KEKA
4 RESERVE
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8 BAD BOYS 2
9 NOON AT NGAYON
10 VIEW FROM THE TOP

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5 NOON AT NGAYON
6 LXG
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8 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
9 WAKING UP IN RENO
10 VIEW FROM THE TOP
11 BAD BOYS 2
12 KEKA

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7 NOON AT NGAYON
8 ITALIAN JOB

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3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
4 ITALIAN JOB

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3 KEKA
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

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4 LXG 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
5 SPY KIDS 3 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35 9:50
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7 KEKA 12:25, 2:30, 4:35, 6:45, 9:00
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3 ITALIAN JOB 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
4 LXG 11:15, 1:50, 4:25, 7:00, 9:45
5 NOON AT NGAYON 11:15, 1:50, 4:25, 7:00, 9:50
6 WAKING UP IN RENO - 10:55, 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45
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3 FINDING NEMO
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6 VIEW FROM THE TOP
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8 THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN

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2% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

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2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

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OFCMKTG. STF 09193352395 KC

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

GET RID OF THE GLASSES FOREVER! Leo Angart The International Vision Training Expert is Coming Aug. 30 & 31, 9am to 4pm T813-3570 • 894-3618

AUCTION SALE

JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC. 100 C Palanca St Quiapo, Manila will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of FEB & MAR 2003 on SEPT. 12, 2003 at 8.30am.
- J Lanuza Auctioneer
(PDI-August 28, 2003

Nuestra-Damus Pawnshop
Makati City
Auction Sale on September 6, 2003 all unredeemed pledges during the month of April 1-30, 2003 Nuestra Br. II Pio-9:30am; Nuestra Br. 10:30am; Damus Pawnshop 12:30pm; Nuestra Main 1:30pm; Nuestra Br. IX 3:00pm
Sons of J. Lanuza - Auctioneer
(PDI-August 28, 2003

NUESTRA-DIAJADE PAWNSHOP LAS PINAS METRO MANILA
Will have its auction sale on September 6, 2003 All unredeemed pledges during the month of April 1-30 2003 Diajade Main-8:30am Diajade Br. I-10.30am: Diajade Br. II-11:30am
Sons of J. Lanuza Auctioneer
(PDI-August 28, 2003

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the intestate estate of the late Aurora Nitura, who died on February 9, 1996 at San Pedro, Laguna has been extra-judicially settled on August 19, 2003 at Pasay City before Manuel G. Garcia, a Notary Public for and in Pasay City per Doc. No. 483, Page 98, Book No. LVII, Series of 2003
(PDI-August 21, 28 and September 4, 2003)

PERSONAL

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BATCHI BOY KOI I AM BEHIND YOU FOREVER! LOVE, BATCHI GIRL MO

St. Jude Novena may the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, loved, glorified and preserved, throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us, St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help of hopeless pray for us . Say this prayer 9 times a day for 9 days, by the 8th day your prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. Thank you St. Jude. Amen

---

Attention : Nurses, Caregivers, Health Care Providers, Agricultural Laborers, Professionals, Businessmen and Students.

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In cooperation with
NZRP NEW ZEALAND, LTD.

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND OUR IMMIGRATION SEMINAR TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF YOUR LIFELONG DREAMS TO STUDY, WORK, MIGRATE AND ACHIEVE PERMANENT RESIDENCE STATUS IN NEW ZEALAND

MR. GRAEME MORRELL
MR. HOBBIE KEARNEY

SPEAKERS/LECTURERS & IMMIGRATION EXPERTS
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

August 30, 2003 (1st Batch, 170 slots available)
August 31, 2003 (2nd Batch, 170 slots available)

Time: 1:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Venue: 4th Floor, MERIT PHILIPPINES
LABODA Building
1139 España corner Adelina Street,
(near Lerma overpass, Mcdonald's
at the Ground Floor, Sampaloc, Manila)

Seminar Fee: P600.00 (inclusive of snacks)
For details & reservation please contact:
Tel. Nos. 721-4188; 722-0964; 721-7370 ask for Vivian, Merle, Marie & Rachma
FIRST COME FIRST SERVED basis in an air-conditioned
170 sitting capacity seminar/lecture room

Republic of the Philippines
CITY COUNCIL
Manila

ORDINANCE NO. ____

AN ORDINANCE EXPROPRIATING A PORTION OF LAND OWNED BY DMCI PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT, INC. COVERED BY TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NOS. 227056 AND 227057, SITUATED ALONG V. MAPA EXTENSION, STA. MESA, MANILA, WITH AN AREA OF TEN THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED FIFTY SIX SQUARE METERS (10,156 SQ.M.) MORE OR LESS, FOR RESALE AT COST OR ON INSTALLMENT BASIS FOR A PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING TWENTY (20) YEARS TO QUALIFIED ACTUAL AND BONA FIDE RESIDENTS AND OCCUPANTS THEREAT, UNDER THE LAND-FOR-THE-LANDLESS PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF MANILA AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it ordained by the City Council of Manila, THAT.

SECTION 1. The expropriation of a portion of land owned by DMCI Property Development, Inc., covered by Transfer Certificate of Title Nos. 227056 and 227057, situated along V. Mapa Extension, Sta. Mesa, Manila, with an area of Ten Thousand One Hundred Fifty Six Square Meters (10,156 Sq.M.) more or less, for resale at cost or on installment basis for a period not exceeding twenty (20) years to qualified actual and bona fide residents and occupants thereat, under the Land-for-the-Landless Program of the City of Manila, is hereby authorized

SEC. 2. An amount equivalent to the zonal valuation of the property shall be appropriated, subject to the availability of funds as certified to by the City Treasurer: *PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That* the amount equivalent to Fifteen Percent (15%) of the zonal valuation of the property shall be set aside from the FIFTY MILLION PESOS (Php 50,000,000.00) lump sum appropriation provided in the Executive Budget for the acquisition of landed estates under the Land-for-the-Landless Program of the City of Manila.

SEC. 3. The Housing and Urban Development Board with the assistance of the Urban Settlements Office and in coordination with Barangay 601, Zone 59 Neighborhood Association, shall take charge of the distribution/award/sale of the above properties to qualified actual and bona fide tenants/occupants thereat, immediately following the acquisition thereof, subject to established policies and guidelines on the matter.

Sec. 4. *Effectivity Clause* – This Ordinance shall take effect upon its approval

Enacted by the City Council of Manila at its regular session today.

Approved by His Honor, the Mayor, on ____

APPROVED

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
Mayor
City of Manila

DANILO B. LACUNA
Vice-Mayor and Presiding Officer
City Council, Manila

ATTESTED:

EMMANUEL R. SISON
Secretary to the Mayor

RODOLFO F. LAPID
Secretary to the City Council

PRINCIPAL AUTHOR: HON. CASIMIRO C. SISON
CO-AUTHORS: Hon. Jocelyn B. Dawis-Asuncion, Hon. Julio E. Logarta, Jr., Hon. Patrick S. Ocampo, Hon. Elizabeth Z. Rivera, Hon. Luciano M. Veloso and HON. MARLON M. LACSON, Majority Floor Leader.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the City Council ordered the publication of the above proposed Ordinance during its regular session held on August 12, 2003, pursuant to the provisions of Section 17, Article III of R.A. 409, is amended, otherwise known as the Revised Charter of the City of Manila

(Sgd.) RODOLFO F. LAPID
City Government Dept. Head III
(Secretary to the City Council)

(PDI – August 28, 2003)

PUBLIC NOTICES

PERSONAL

Thank You Very Much Holy Spirit From: Gemma Santos & Family

NOTICE OF LOSS

Lost Saudi Passport for IBRAIM M. MUGREN and airline tickets whoever finds it, please contact 09162244302 or The Saudi Embassy 8870903
(PDI-Aug 28, 2003)

Lost Saudi Passport for IBRAIM A. ALGHAWI and airline tickets whoever finds it, please contact 09162244302 or The Saudi Embassy 8870903.
(PDI-Aug 28, 2003)

Notice is hereby given that the stock certificate #134 in the name of DR. LUISITO R. LOPEZ of Rural Bank of Antipolo was lost. If no contest w/n a month new certificate would be issued. PDI -Aug. 28, Sept. 4 & 11, 2003

PUBLIC NOTICES

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me I in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen. Person must pray this in 3 consecutive days without stating one's wish. After the 3rd day your wish will be granted no matter how difficult it may be. Promise to publish this ad as soon as your favor has been granted. Thank You.

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE OF LOSS
STARCOM ORIGINAL RECEIPT WAS LOST ANY TRANSACTION MADE VIA SUBJECT O.R. # 5160 IS NULL AND VOID.

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KALAYAAN

IN THE MATTER OF

REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION
x - x

ORDER

WHEREAS, all corporations are required to submit annual reports such as the General Information Sheet and Financial Statements pursuant to Sec. 141 of the Corporation Code of the Philippines:

WHEREAS, the records of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) show that there are many corporations who failed to submit the abovementioned reports for the last six (6) consecutive years, i.e. for period 1997 – 2002.

WHEREFORE, NOTICE is hereby given that those **corporations registered from 1985 to 1991** who failed to submit the said reports are directed to appear within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this Order before the Law and Regulation Division, Company Registration and Monitoring Department of this Commission at the 3rd floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Mandaluyong City during office hours and **show cause why their Certificates of Registration should not be revoked.**

After the lapse of the said thirty (30) day period and the said delinquent corporations have not updated their files, as well as, settled the corresponding fine or penalty, **their Certificate of Registration shall be deemed revoked.**

Let this Order be published once in a newspaper of general circulation.

SO ORDERED.

Mandaluyong City, August 20, 2003.

(Sgd.) BENITO A. CATARAN
Director
Company Registration and Monitoring Department

(PDI–Aug. 28, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
PROVINCIAL GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE
Provincial Capitol, Dipolog City
Tel. No. (065) 212-3561 Telefax No. (065) 212-6492
E-mail: znpgso@mozcom.com

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The provincial government of Zamboanga del Norte thru the Provincial General Services Office is inviting duly licensed suppliers to bid for the supply and delivery of the following equipment, viz:

1	unit	Road Grader, Komatsu, 135HP min., (Surplus/Recon)
4	units	Hydraulic Excavator, Komatsu, 125HP min., Crawler Type (Surplus/Recon)
2	units	Vibrator Road Roller (Bomag, Dynapac or Ingersollrand) 125HP min., (Surplus/Recon)
1	unit	Tandem Vibratory Roller (Dynapac, Bomag or Ingersollrand) 125HP min., (Surplus/Recon)
5	units	Dump Truck, 10 Wheeler (Isuzu, Nissan, Mitsubishi or Fuso) 300HP min., (Surplus/Recon)
4	units	Dump Truck, 6x6, Military Type, 240HP min., Japan (Surplus/Recon)
1	unit	Water Truck, 150HP min., 10,000 ltrs. Tank capacity, Japan (Surplus/Recon)
1	unit	Prime Mover with 40 tons capacity Low Bed Trailer, 310HP min., Japan (Surplus/Recon)
2	units	Bulldozer, 165HP min. (Track type) Caterpillar (Surplus/Recon)
1	unit	Forklift 3.5 tons min. (Nissan/TCM) Japan, (Surplus/Recon)

Schedule of Activities	Date	Time
Submission of Pre-qualification Documents	Sept. 3 to 9, 2003	
Evaluation of Pre-qualified Documents	Sept. 9 to 12, 2003	
Issuance of Bid Documents (Pre-Qualified suppliers Only)	Sept. 15 to 19, 2003	
Pre-Bid Conference	Sept. 25, 2003	10:00 A.M.
Deadline for Submission of Bids	Sept. 25, 2003	2:00 P.M.
Opening of Bids	Sept. 25, 2003	2:00 P.M.

All activities shall be held at the Provincial General Services Office, Provincial Capitol, Dipolog City, unless announced otherwise.

Duly licensed Suppliers/Dealers who are interested to participate in this bidding may inquire from the Provincial General Services Office (PGSO) regarding pre-qualification requirements and submit the same not later than 5:00 o'clock on September 9, 2003 for evaluation. Only qualified suppliers/dealers who shall be notified by fax or cable can obtain the bid documents from the PGSO upon presentation of the Official Receipt for payment made to the Provincial Treasurer's Office of a non-refundable amount of Php 500.00.

All bids must be accompanied with a Bid Security in an amount equivalent to five percent 5% of the total bid proposal either in Cash/Manager's Check/or Surety Bond issued by the GSIS.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept the offer found to be most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ELIZABETH G. BARBASO
Provincial General Services Officer

APPROVED:
(Sgd.) ISAGANI S. AMATONG
Provincial Governor

(PDI–Aug. 28, 2003)

Swift

SWIFT FOODS, INC.

NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of SWIFT FOODS, INC. which is scheduled to be held at the Auditorium, RFM Corporate Center, Pioneer corner Sheridan Sts., Mandaluyong City on 29 August 2003 at 10:30 A.M. is postponed and moved to 19 September 2003 at the same time and venue.

(Sgd.) **CRISTINA D. REYES**
Corporate Secretary

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT

J.P. Laurel Avenue, Davao City
Tel No 221-9400 Fax No. 226-4885/224-5392

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Davao City Water District (DCWD) hereby invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Qty./Unit	Description	Ceiling of Bid Price
1 package	Supply and Installation of a HP9000 RISC-Based Server with HP-UX version 11i Operating System For Calendar year 2003	Php. 3,000,000.00

Eligibility requirements of the above package are available at the Purchasing Division Office Starting August 21, 2003 during its business hours. Deadline for the submission of eligibility documents/requirements will be on or before September 8, 2003.

Eligible Bidders shall be notified in writing as to when and where the Pre-Bid Conference will be set, including the availability of Bid Documents.

DCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/informality of the bids and to accept only such bids which are advantageous to the District.

(Sgd.) ALFONSO E. LAID
AGM for Administration
Chairman, Bid & Canvass Committee

(PDI–Aug. 21 & 28, 2003)

Magiclip moves to Ortigas Center

THE MAGICLIP Products Philippines Inc., manufacturer and distributor of Magiclip, an award-winning invention, has moved to its new office at Unit 408, Strata 100 Building, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, and now in its 19th year of business operation here and abroad (634-05-53), vice president for administration, Natividad M. Dango has announced last week.

Dango said the Company continues to create innovative products such as Clip-All, Compuholder, Negatoscope, Collapsible Easel Board, Collapsible Tripod, Push Cart Shopping List Holder, Whiteboards, etc.

The company is presently exporting to Singapore and the Middle East. The products are available in all National Book Stores, Shoe Mart, Office Warehouse, Office 1 Superstore, Expressions, Merriam and Webster Bookstore, Goodwill Bookstore, NBS Book Express, Homeworks, and Gaisano.

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Republic of the Philippines
SENATE
Pasay City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID
(Administrative Order No. 001, 2. 1988)

The Senate of the Philippines invites all eligible bidders to prequalify and to bid for the following services for **Year 2004:**

A. PUBLIC BIDDING

1. Canteen Concessioning/Catering
2. HMO
3. Housekeeping
4. Preventive Maintenance of Computers & Peripherals
5. Rental of Copier Machines
6. Rental of Shuttle Bus
7. Subscription to Local/International Newspapers & Magazines
8. Subscription to Local/International Journals & Reviews
9. Supply of Gasoline
10. Senate Secretariat Male Uniform
11. Senate Secretariat Female Uniform
12. Timekeeping System
13. ECG System (PC-base)
14. Defibrillator
15. Printing & binding of RECORD OF THE SENATE (July 24-Oct 2, 2000) and JOURNAL OF THE SENATE (Vol. 1, July 27-Dec. 23, 1998; Vol. II, Jan. 18-June 3, 1999)

B. SEALED BIDDING

1. Cooling Tower Water Treatment Program
2. Garbage Disposal
3. Rental of Drinking Fountains
4. Sanitizers and Deodorizers
5. Subscription to Cable Television
6. Supply of Flowers
7. Preventive Maintenance of 360T York Chillers

Prospective bidders for the **PUBLIC BIDDING** may obtain the prequalification requirements at the PBAC Secretariat Office, Room 401, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Pasay City from **September 1-5, 2003.** Deadline for the submission of complete and duly accomplished prequalification documents shall be on **September 12, 2003.** ***Incomplete prequalification requirements will not be entertained.*** All applicants shall be notified on the result of the prequalification proceedings. **ONLY PREQUALIFIED BIDDERS SHALL BE ISSUED THE APPROVED SCOPE OF WORKS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS FOR BIDDING.**

All bids under the public bidding category must be accompanied by a bid bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check, or surety bond. All surety bonds must be callable on demand. **Late bids will be rejected.**

Bidders participating in the **SEALED BIDDING** may secure requirements from the Property and Procurement Services (PPS) located at Room 401, Senate of the Philippines, Pasay City. Schedule of conferences for services under this category, if any, will be announced later including the deadline for the dropping of bids.

The winning bidder(s) for each category shall post a Performance Bond in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check, or surety bond equivalent to fifteen percent (15%) of the total contract price. For prepaid contracts the performance bond shall be equivalent to one hundred percent (100%).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS OR ANY PART THEREOF WITHOUT OFFERING ANY REASON, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT THE OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND AND/OR PURSUE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE OR INDEMNIFY THE BIDDER FOR ANY EXPENSE OR LOSS THAT THEY MAY INCUR IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS UNDERTAKING NOR DOES IT GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS
Chairman, Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Aug. 26, 27 & 28, 2003)

PNOC PETROCHEMICAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY)

11/F BA Lepanto Building
8747 Paseo de Roxas
1227 Makati City, Philippines

Tel No. 892-0293
892-0283
750-2693

Fax No.: 810-6418

RE-INVITATION TO REGISTER, APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PNOC-Petrochemical Development Corporation (PPDC) invites interested Filipino contractors currently accredited with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB), and in good standing to register, apply for eligibility and if subsequently found eligible to bid for the following project described below:

Project Title/ Scope of Work	Approved Budget	PCAB License Minimum Req't.	Scope of Work/ Duration	Similar Contracts
PPDC Jetty Piles Corrosion Protection Project (WSC-02-010)	P18,303,150.00	Port, Harbor and Offshore Engineering/ Medium B	Application of Corrosion Protection System / 180 CD	Construction of Ports, Harbor and Pier Facilities

A. The project is located at the Petrochemical Industrial Estate (PIE) in Limay and Mariveles, Bataan, with funding to be provided by PPDC.

B. Only contractors duly registered with PPDC shall be allowed to participate in the eligibility screening. Interested bidders must register not later than the deadline of submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) on September 17, 2003. A list of basic requirements for registration is available from the BAC Secretariat at the PPDC Makati office.

C. Eligibility statement forms will be issued to registered bidders from September 2-26, 2003, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00.

D. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using a "PASS/FAIL" criteria, and only eligible bidders shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the Contractor's offer, subject to Post-qualification before an award is made. Bid prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid shall be rejected and returned outright.

E. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements	October 03, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. (PPDC Makati)
Issuance of Bid Documents	October 25 – November 03, 2003
Pre-Bid Conference	November 06, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. (PPDC Bataan)
Submission and Opening of Bids	November 21, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. (PPDC Makati)

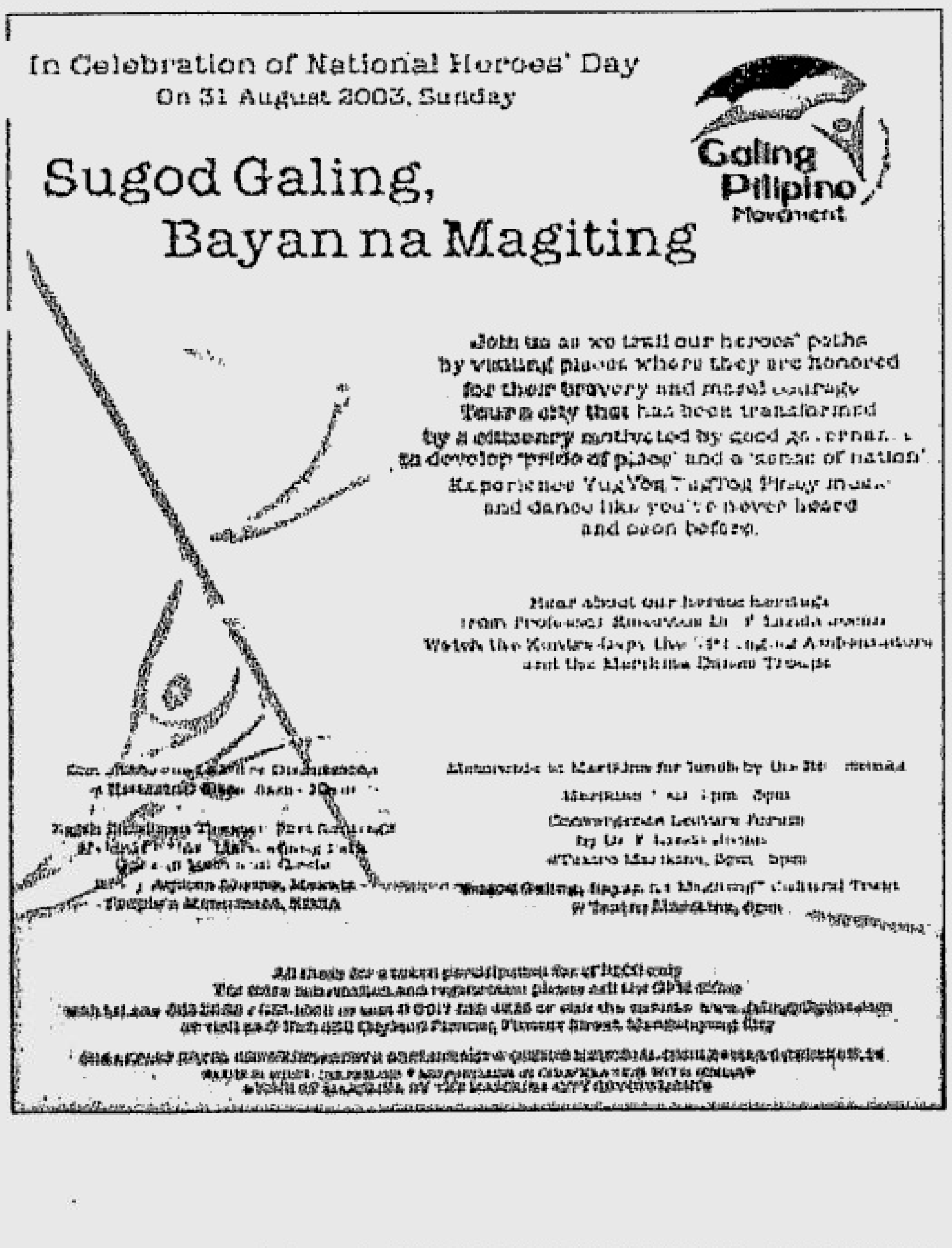
F. All particulars relative to registration, eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of Executive Order No. 40 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

G. PPDC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PPDC. PPDC further assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss they may incur in the preparation of their bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Signed this 26th day of August, 2003.

(Sgd.) VICTORIO MARIO A. DIMAGIBA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Aug. 28 & Sept. 5, 2003)



In Celebration of National Heroes' Day
On 31 August 2003, Sunday

Sugod Galing,
Bayan na Magiting

Join us as we trail our heroes' paths
by visiting places where they are honored
for their bravery and moral courage
Tour a city that has been transformed
by a citizenry motivated by good governance
to develop "pride of place" and a "sense of nation".
Experience [illegible] Pinoy music
and dance like you've never heard
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In Loving Memory

on his 10th Death Anniversary of

ROQUE "tete" VAÑO ESCAÑO

of Malitbog, Leyte & Cagayan de Oro
Who died in the Grace of our Lord on August 28, 1993

Holy masses will be offered today, Thursday, August 28, 2003 at the following churches:

Greenhills Memorial Park	4:00 p.m.
San Vicente Ferrer, Cugman	6:00 a.m.
San Isidro Labrador, Gusa	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Fatima, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Sacred Heart Parish, Recto Avenue	5:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Carmen	6:00 a.m.
St. Augustine Cathedral	5:30 p.m.
San Antonio Parish, Nazareth	6:00 a.m.
Sto. Niño Parish, Cogon	6:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception, Bulua	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Bukidnon	6:00 a.m.

The RIA (ROQUE, ISIDRO, ASUNCION) HOJAS ESCAÑO FOUNDATION, INC. Board of Trustees, Officers, and Staff, relatives and friends request the pious readers to remember ROQUE in their prayers.

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I ask: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.

Psalm 27:4

Ligaya Lorico Canta

Died peacefully at the age of 73 on 25 August 2003.

Her loving husband Roberto (†), children Tito & Nemia, Gay & Danny, Freddie & Angelie; grandchildren Papoo, Angelo, Annika, Piolo and Andre; sisters Luning Virginia, Mila, Josephina, Elma & Maria; brothers Armando, Rolando, Andy, Romy & Frankie; nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul

Her remains lie in state at the Sto. Domingo Church, St. John Mortuary in Quezon City.

Cremation will follow at the La Funeraria Paz after the 7:00 a.m. Mass at the Sto. Domingo Church, on Sunday, 31st August 2003.

TEODORA AUSTRIA VDA. DE ARELLANO

of Tiaong, Quezon

Died in the Grace of Our Lord on August 26, 2003 at the age of 87.

Her loving children, **Policarpio, Sofia, Asuncion, Gregorio, Emiliana, Rustica, Claro, Eduvijes, Irene** and **Ma. Lourdes**, in-laws, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at **La Funeraria Paz-Sucat** (inside **Manila Memorial Park**), Parañaque City.

Interment at Tiaong, Quezon to be announced later.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

The Medical Mission Sisters

Announce the death of

SR. M. FELICITAS K. ARANDA, MMS

on August 27, 2003 at the age of 78.

Mass of the Resurrection will be offered on Saturday, August 30, 2003 at 9:00 A.M. at the Medical Mission Sisters Chapel, #30 F. Collantes Street Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

The Medical Mission Sisters and the Aranda family request you to offer prayers for her eternal repose.

In lieu of flowers, spiritual gifts will be appreciated.

The Family of the late

Belinda "Boots" Santos-Bacani

sincerely convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and massages of sympathy, visited and kept vigil in our hour of sorrow, attended funeral rites and in many ways, comforted us in our moment of grief.

May God Bless You All.

"We walk by faith not by sight... confident and well-pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:7-8

JANNETTE G. PINEDA

May 16, 1950 - August 27, 2003

We, Jannette's loving children **Coleen & Toffer**; brothers **Eusebio Serafin & Melchor**; sisters **Vivencia, Fely, Agring, Hilda, Celerina, Carina, Theresa, Leonida, Marivic & Mary Ann**, and other loved ones, request you to join us in celebrating Jannette's coming home to the Lord.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington East the Garden Chapels, C. Raymundo corner Mercedez Avenue, Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

"Your presence will be deeply missed but the memories of your Goodness will live with us & remain in our hearts forever".

children, brothers & sisters

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❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
• DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

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&

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Eggs...Eat A Miracle Everyday!

SEPTEMBER 19 - 21, 2003
Megatrade Halls 2 & 3, 5th Level
Building B, SM Megamall Mandaluyong City

The Philippine Daily Inquirer and The 3rd Philippine EGG SHOW 2003 "Eggs...Eat A Miracle Everyday!" are working together to come out with a very special supplement about the Show, highlights the Egg Museum and Egg Mini Zoo among others.

Advertisers who want to be a part of this very special supplement are entitled to full color advertising with NO SURCHARGE and reasonable rates for Metro Manila circulation (tabloid size).

YES, we agree to place a ____ *page ad in* The Egg Show 2003 Newspaper Supplement *in the amount of P* ____ ____.00
We also agree to submit the ad material in TIF, EPS or JPEG file format not later than SEPTEMBER 10, 2003 (Wednesday)

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Signature_

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THE SUPPLEMENT IS SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE ON SEPTEMBER " 2003 IN LINE WITH THE OPENING OF THE 3RD PHILIPPINE EGG SHOW 200
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☐ Half page	(approx. 24 7cm [W] x 15cm [H])	P 27,760 00
☐ 1 full page	(approx. 24.7 cm [W] x 30cm. [H])	P 50,473 00

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THE SUPPLEMENT IS SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2003 IN LINE WITH THE OPENING OF DESIGN BUILD 2003. WE HAVE THESE VERY SPECIAL ADVERTISING RATES.

1/8 page	(approx. 12 35 cm. [W] x 7.5cm. [H])	P 8,398.00
Quarter page	(approx. 12 35 cm [W] x 15 cm [H])	P 15,268 00
Half page	(approx. 24.7cm [W] x 15cm. [H])	P 27,760 00
1 full page	(approx. 24.7 cm [W] x 30cm. [H])	P 50,473.00

YES, we agree to place a ______________ *page ad in* Design Build 2003 Newspaper Supplement *in the amount of P*__ __.00 . *We also agree to submit the ad material in TIF, EPS or JPEG file format not later than SEPTEMBER 12, 2003 (Friday)*

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DiSenyo
BUILD SHOW
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
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Signature _

FOR INQUIRIES CALL: Tel. Nos. (632) 726.4128-30 • F: (632) 724.4578 • E-mail: convex@mozcom.com

The Board of Directors,
Management and Staff of

CONCEPCION INDUSTRIES GROUP

deeply regret the untimely demise
of our former President

REYNALDO A. CONCEPCION

on August 26, 2003, at the age of 62.

We ask the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.
His body lies in state at the Capilla del Señor,
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.
The funeral mass will be on Saturday, August 30, 2003 at 9:00 a.m.
Cremation will follow.

The Board of Directors, Management, and staff of

CONCEPCION CARRIER AIRCONDITIONING COMPANY

deeply regret the untimely demise of

Reynaldo A. Concepcion

who peacefully joined His Creator on August 26, 2003 at the age of 62.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla del Señor,
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City
A funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, August 30, 2003 at 9 am.
Cremation will follow thereafter.

In Loving Memory
Of Our Dearly Beloved

REYNALDO A. CONCEPCION

"RENE"

January 7, 1941 – August 26, 2003

He is survived by his loving *Wife*, SUSAN PUYAT,
Children, REYNALDO, JR. and ROSE MAY,
CHRISTOPHER and MARISA,
JAMES and INGRID,
MARIA ELENA and *Grandchildren*

Brothers, sister and In-Laws, JOSE JR.
and MARIA VICTORIA,
RAUL and MENCHU, MELY and
PAING HECHANOVA.

Brothers-in-Law, Sisters-in-Law,
Nephews and Nieces

The Funeral Mass will be on Saturday,
August 30, 2003 at 9:00 AM
at the Santuario de San Antonio,
Forbes Park, Makati City.
Cremation follows at Loyola Memorial Park,
Marikina City.

In Lieu of Flowers, please donate
to the Santuario de San Antonio Parish Foundation

PRU CHALLENGE 2003

Kuala Lumpur Surprise!

Congratulations to the Winners of the 2003 Mid-year Convention!

Top Producers

Anna Liza Valarao
Chrysolite Branch
MM5

Josephine Dumlao
Chrysolite Branch
MM5

Ma. Victoria delos Santos
Gemstone Branch
MM4

With determination and focus, Pru Life UK's top producers have once more proven that the only factors essential to success are vision, conviction and unwavering determination to reach the goals we have set before us. As we close the first semester of 2003, we salute these agents and agency leaders who have battled againts all odds to secure an early lead for themselves, and the Company they proudly represent.

Congratulations, agents, and we are one with you as you continue to blaze your way to victory for the rest of 2003.

Bobby
Bobby G. Madrid
President and CEO
Pru Life U.K

Level 3

KUALA LUMPUR QUALIFIERS

BM Category

Henry Gocuan
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

UM Category

Katherine Yap
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

Producer Category

Edwin Gocuan
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

Ma. Lourdes Yap
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

Marie Jocelyn Cang
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

Gina Marie Saw
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

Henson Tan
China Jade Branch
MM1

Aurora Natividad
Star Asia Branch
South Mindanao

Juanita Ong
Blue Pearl Branch
East/Central Visayas

Level 2

TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS QUALIFIERS

BM Category	*Branch*
Hue Hun Koa	China Jade
Elias Efren dela Rosa Jr.	Azurite
Niceno Macabuag	Tektite

UM Category	*Branch*
Jaime Barba	Blue Pearl
Maria Fe Asprer	Blue Pearl
Sonia Albano	Diamond
Darwin Andrey	Tektite
Valentin Go	China Jade
Zenaida Amio	Azurite

Producer Category	*Branch*
Anna Liza Valarao	Chrysolite
Josephine Dumlao	Chrysolite
Bernadette Tad-Y	Blue Pearl
Rosie Sy	China Jade
Debbie Borromeo	Blue Pearl
Gwendolyn Pardo	Blue Pearl
Rebecca Camarista	Red Onyx
Maria Fides Yap	Blue Pearl
Ma. Jonnah Nubla	Amethyst
Angelique Cuevas	Blue Pearl
Jonash Go	China Jade
Florence Saavedra	Red Onyx
Lourdes Ines Ramos	Diamond
Cornelio Pahang	Blue Pearl

Level 1

QUALIFIERS

BM Category	*Branch*
Kristin Borromeo	Borromeo
Aurora Janet Camarista	Red Onyx
Nilda Medalle	Star Asia
Conchita Tan	Amethyst
Teresita Robles	Crystal Quartz

UM Category	*Branch*
Elsa Sambalilo	Ruby
Benigno Valarao	Chrysolite
Jacqueline Grace Lao	Amethyst
Nellie King	China Jade
Pedro Lim	China Jade
James Edward Nicolas	Jasper

Producer Category	*Branch*
Rodrigo Ragaza	Blue Pearl
Ma. Victoria delos Santos	Gemstone
Lawrence Yu	Borromeo
Ma. Olga Antigua	Blue Pearl
Rodolfo Alba II	Citrine
Aurelio Cifra	Jasper
Danilo So	Ruby
Juliana Tuazon	Ruby
Leonida Escosia	Riverstone
Arceli Tan	Tektite
Aurora Gesmundo	Diamond
Evelyn Tan	Beryl
Rafael Asprer Jr.	Blue Pearl
Marites Modina	Blue Pearl
Marina Lourdes Villanueva	Diamond
John Yap	Blue Pearl
Marcial Tuanqui Jr.	Blue Sapphire
Rhea Roxane Tacder	Blue Pearl
John Peter Pastrana	Blue Pearl
Lorna Reyes	Diamond
Jeffrey Tan	Blue Pearl
Fredricka Callueng	Jasper
Artemio Wapanio	Blue Pearl
Marilou Huang Peir Pyng	China Jade
Olivia Coloma	Coloma
Leah Alvarado	Citrine
Maria Isabel Cokai	China Jade
Maura Gutierrez	Mercury
Mary Ann Latonio	Blue Pearl
Romerico Formoso	Jasper
Ma. Cristina Suarez	Blue Pearl
Nila Dacanay	Citrine
Ed Dante Latonio	Blue Pearl
Paul Fronda	Coloma
Margaret Ledesma	Blue Pearl
Ma. Aisa Villacorta	Diamond
Emilie Paguio	Baluyot
Lourdes Balagtas	Jasper
Dorothy Decosto	Azurite
Annabelle Lagamayo	China Jade
Elizabeth Tan	Citrine
Marcela Bella Sison	Aragonite
Juliet Ku	Amethyst
Caridad Manabat	Jasper
Monserrat Suria	Jasper
Beltran Reyes	Copper
Manuel Siy	China Jade
Lolita Uy	China Jade
Edna De Roxas	Jasper
Tessie Go Que	China Jade
Ma. Cecilia Jorge	Baluyot
Sheila Ailyn Magpantay	Riverstone

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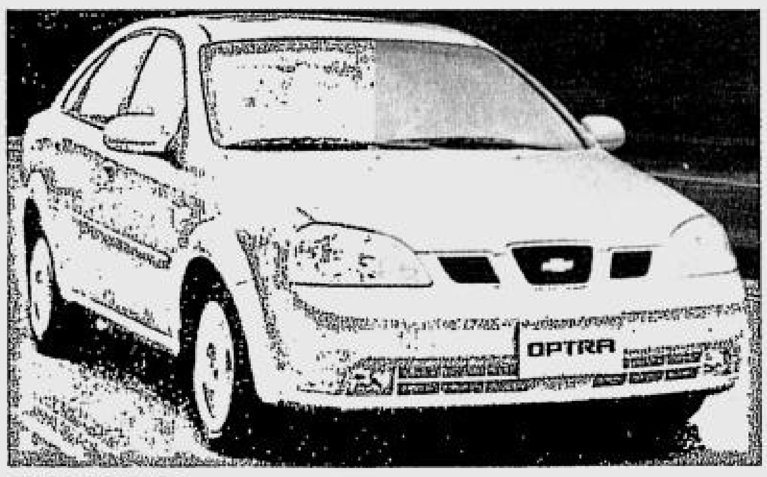
MOTORING

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

3 Chevy autos join design fray

By Tessa R. Salazar



THE 1.6-LITER Optra

IF TOYOTA'S Vios and Honda's City set the tone for design-driven competition in the local auto market, then General Motors Automobiles Philippines is poised to take the game into overdrive.

GMPh, a subsidiary of American car giant General Motors, simultaneously introduced its Aveo, Optra and Zafira models.

The Aveo is a 5-door hatchback, Optra a 1.6-liter sedan, while the Zafira is the family wagon relaunched.

GM Philippines officials said the introduction of its three models was timed just right, as they observed the market attention now shifting from the utilitarian AUVs and 10-seater vans to design-driven cars.

Driven by design

GMPh sales and marketing director Nicky Mariano said the vehicle market was again going back to the trends exhibited during the late 1980s to the early 1990s, when auto buyers were driven by design. When redesigned and "souped-up" AUVs and vans began to surface in the mid-1990s, it was all their show from then on.

Now the tide is shifting, Mariano noted, and he assessed the shift would "do good" to the industry since "attention would return to passenger cars."

Hard to ignore

Mariano said as buyers start looking for cars, the Aveo, Optra and Zafira would be difficult to ignore.

The five-door entry-level Aveo is powered by a 1.5-liter SOHC inline engine. It is obviously positioned for the younger market, with its attention-grabbing brilliant green, sports blue, active red, dove silver and galaxy white stock colors.

It has a rear seat that folds and flips forward for more cargo area.

Apart from its chic colors, its price is positioned to grab the City and the Vios market with its slightly cheaper price tag of P575,000 for the manual transmission and P615,000 for the automatic transmission (The 1.3-L City's prices range from P539,000 to P659,000 while Vios is avaliable at 1.3L and

3 CHEVY/ C2

AVEO'S hip color, design and price appeal to the young market.

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- Camshaft manufacturing, grinding and complete rebuilding of cam lobes for all types of automotive, marine, heavy equipment and heavy stationary engines
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MITSUBISHI-4G63 DOHC, Evolution (turbo engine), 4G13/15 SOHC

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TIME TO GET EXCITED ABOUT DRIVING AGAIN.

Introducing The New Chevrolet Optra. American muscle. Italian styling. British-tuned suspension.
The newest world car from Chevrolet. Designed by Pininfarina and powered by [illegible] DOHC engine.
The perfect union of Chevrolet reliability and classic styling. [illegible] Chevrolet dealer and GM AutoWorld showrooms.
[illegible]
Chevrolet Optra. Good looking [illegible]

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533-1263
Tel/ Fax No 535-4937 / 535-4935

GM AutoWorld PAMPANGA
MacArthur Highway Dolores,
City of San Fernando, Pampanga
Tel Nos (045) 961-2002/ (045) 961-2003
(045) 961-2533/ (045) 963-3333
Fax No (045) 860-2000

Chevrolet Pampanga
San Fernando Olongapo Highway
City of San Fernando Pampanga
Tel No (045) 963-3333

GM AutoWorld CEBU
Gov. Cuenco Ave Cebu City
Tel No. (32) 234-0420
Fax No. (32) 231-7760

See the Chevrolet Optra at
[illegible]

SOMETHING 'FISHY' AT IPC

Isuzu releases fingerlings, builds garbage trap

By Tessa R. Salazar

NOW what is Isuzu—maker of fuel economy pickups, AUVs and utility vehicles—up to with tilapia fingerlings in its hands?

Well, you don't have to find Nemo to know the answer. Isuzu Philippines, in line with its environmental and community programs, released 10,000 three- and four-inch tilapia fingerlings for breeding in Laguna Lake a few weeks ago.

Pet project

President Macapagal-Arroyo had recently declared tilapia breeding a "pet" project among her Strong Republic livelihood programs.

So, what better place to ensure the success of tilapia breeding than in the countrys biggest lake?

For this particular event, the Laguna Lake Development Authority assisted Isuzu engineers, officials and employees in properly releasing the fingerlings.

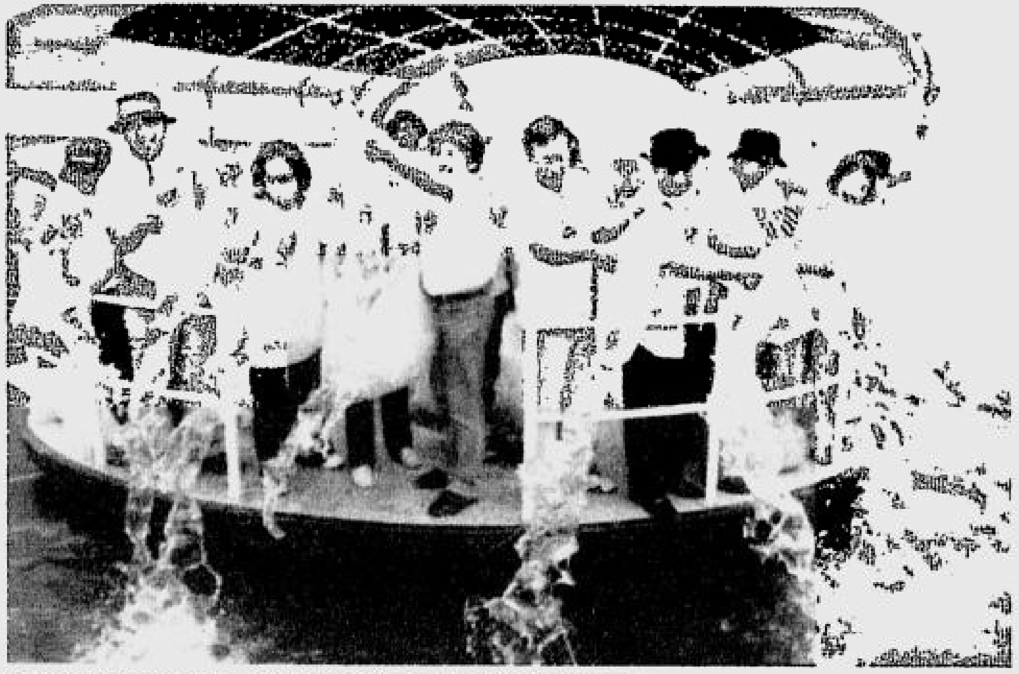
Garbage trap

To make sure tilapia bred in clean, garbage-free waters, Isuzu engineers, technicians and employees also set out to build an L-shaped garbage trap.

The 2-meter-high by 3-meter-wide trap was installed beneath a 3.5-meter-high bridge and operated via a pulley and reel cable to open and close the trap.

Isuzu mechanical engineer Edward de Guzman said horizontal and vertical steel rods reinforce the traps, so that even rough waters caused by inclement weather would not damage the structure.

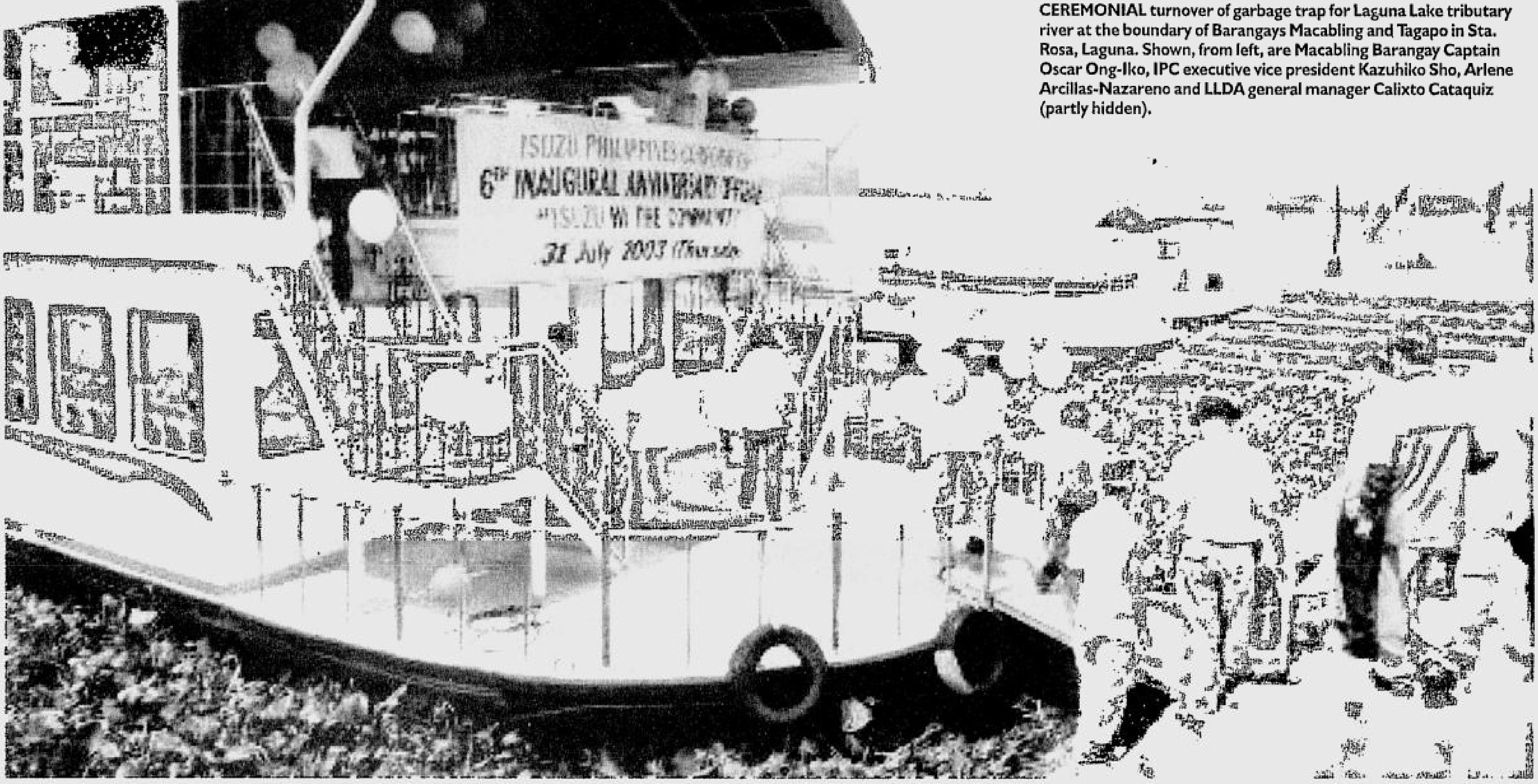
The local government unit will be tasked to maintain the garbage trap, which was designed to last for 10 years.



IPC employees and guests helped in seeding tilapia breeders.

ISUZ
6th Inaugural
Anniversary Offering
for
Brgy Macabling & Brgy Tagapo
Sta. Rosa laguna

CEREMONIAL turnover of garbage trap for Laguna Lake tributary river at the boundary of Barangays Macabling and Tagapo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Shown, from left, are Macabling Barangay Captain Oscar Ong-Iko, IPC executive vice president Kazuhiko Sho, Arlene Arcillas-Nazareno and LLDA general manager Calixto Cataquiz (partly hidden).



CRUISE boat used for seeding 10,000 tilapia breeders to protect and safeguard Laguna Lake from environmental degradation.

3 Chevy . . .

From page C1

1.5L with prices ranging from P578,000 to P678,000.).

Design

The Aveo's contours are credited to the work of legendary car designer Giorgetto Giugiaro, who also designed the 1960s classic Fiat 850 Spider, the Maserati Ghibli, the BMW 3.0CSL Batmobile and the new Maserati Spider.

The 1.6-liter Optra sedan was a collaboration of the design center of GM Daewoo and popular auto technology and Italian design company Pininfarina for the contours of its interiors and exteriors.

The Optra began production in GM Thailand June this year. Offered in black sapphire, star silver, Thai gold metallic, shanghai red and denim blue, The Optra M/T goes for P675,000, the A/T at P715,000. The Optra and Aveo go with a three-year warranty or (100,000 km) and two years of free periodic maintenance services.

GMPh president and general manager James Lim said the Philippines is one among six countries in the Asia-Pacific region where the Optra would be launched this year.

Compact family van

The relaunched Zafira, a 1.8-liter compact family van, is a seven-seater described as "in between a passenger car and a 10-seater van for the Filipino family."

"A typical Filipino family averages six to eight members. Zafira would suit them real fine," assessed Mariano.

Zafira has added more features this time, but has retained its powertrain and styling. Its price, surprisingly, has gone down, from P1,265,000 to P1,090,000. Zafira anchors on its FLEX-7 technology.

The passenger compartment can be converted from a one-seater to seven-seater with 39 seating configurations.

The Optra and Zafira are built in GM Thailand, which has a $700-million plant that sits on 190 acres in the Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate in Rayong Province.

FAMILY wagon Zafira

Make way for Peugeot

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

IT seems that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is not only anti-environmentalist, it has also become anti-business.

Even as the brouhaha over MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando's penchant to kill trees has yet to die down, here comes another blot to BF's administration: Business is dying in the Chino Roces Avenue area in Makati City because of MMDA's seemingly unregulated, if not out-of-control, road diggings. Out-of-control because the construction job there has not been attended to with dispatch. It's been going on at a snail's pace and businesses in that stretch has been at a slowdown; two establishments have already closed shop and, if the road repairs are not finished soon, more will close down.

Look, the 2.4-km road currently undergoing repair has a budget of P98 million, which includes provisions for expenses to declog the area of drainage wastes, install street lights, concrete the avenue and clear the pavement of sidewalk vendors.

What's taking the MMDA that long to finish the project boggles the mind. In other countries, road repairs are done almost on a 24-hour basis; the load of work happens at nighttime, when there are fewer vehicles on the road.

What gives, BF?

* * *

Here is a letter from Raymond Palatino of 13 San Vicente, SFDM, Q.C. 1105.

"Dear Mr. Mendoza:

"I am curious to know what your stand is regarding the MMDA order banning basketball courts in the streets. You are both a sportswriter and a columnist in the Motoring section. Your opinion is much respected especially if it concerns the promotion of sports and the easing of Metro traffic.

"I write to express the sentiment of a basketball fan/player who grew up in a community where basketball is played in the streets because no gymnasium or proper sports facilities exist.

"Basketball should really be played inside a gym or a covered court. The streets are for motor vehicles and not for playing. But why do basketball courts proliferate in the streets?

"The reason is the of lack of sports facilities in the community. Many barangay officials lack the will to build sports facilities.

"Basketball is played in the streets not because the youth are undisciplined and deliberate law violators.

"The MMDA order to demolish the basketball courts in the streets disregards the benefits derived from playing basketball. Parents would prefer their children to play basketball rather than see them waste their lives on illegal drugs.

"Just the other day, we saw two street basketball courts torn down in a barangay in Sta Cruz, Manila.

"Some of our best players today were honed in the streets when they were young.

"I agree, basketball should not be played in the streets. But before they tear down the courts, they must first replace them with another one within the community."

The reader is right. The streets are for vehicles, not for basketball courts. He is right, too, when he said that parents would rather that they see their children play basketball than see them get hooked on drugs. And again, he is right when he batted for the construction of a basketball court within the community; indulgence in sports is a right guaranteed by the Constitution.

In short, I couldn't agree more with the reader. Remove the basketball courts from the streets and put them in their proper places.

There ought to be a law requiring all barangays in this country to have a basketball court in a place near the barangay hall, away from the streets.

Paging Senator Jaworski?

* * *

Peugeot, that car as French as Brigitte Bardot, has risen in sales by 58 percent in the last four years.

I'm not surprised.

In its more than a century of existence, Peugeot has consistently created a style, personality and character truly its own.

Not only is the Peugeot known for its unique style, it is also famous for its dependability in road racing events; it allows the brand to demonstrate its technological expertise in world-famed races.

Through the years, Peugeot has been dominating the fabled Indianapolis Speedway, the torturous Paris-Dakar Rally and the exciting 24-hour Le Mans.

Peugeot's lion emblem is a marquee to be reckoned with.

Peugeot's return to the World Rally Championship in 2000 was a huge success; the team claimed both the Driver's and Manufacturer's titles. It duplicated the feats in 2001 and 2002, cementing Peugeot's status as the most dominant team of the new millennium.

Peugeot will soon set up shop in the Philippines as it brings in three exciting models: the World Rally Champion 206 road version; the 206cc which is the world's first four-passenger car with a retractable roof; and the innovative Car of the Year 307.

AutoFrance Philippines Inc. is the exclusive distributor of Peugeot, with its dealer/showroom located at Peugeot Ortigas Centre, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Here's a glass to Peugeot, whose entry into our shores is another proof of the country's resurgence in the automotive industry.

Who said we are in a slump?

* * *

QUOTE ME. There is government neglect when even the construction of a small barangay bridge (Canatan Bridge for example) isn't repaired with dispatch. Most big deeds start small.

The trend in pickup trucks

ALONG with big sport utility vehicles (SUVs), pickup trucks are the most profitable products of the automobile industry. The bigger and more luxurious they are, the bigger the profit margin for manufacturers. In the United States, the birthplace of the pickup truck, the Big Three—General Motors, Ford and Chrysler/Dodge—are producing larger, more powerful and more luxurious pickups. And smiling all the way to the bank. Did you know, for instance, that last year sales of the Ford F-Series contributed $2.4-billion net income to Ford Motor? A Merrill Lynch analyst said so.

No other country in the world makes and sells as many pickup trucks as the US and the trend these past few years has been toward bigger luxury pickups. A recent article in The New York Times by Danny Hakim confirms the fact that the Ford F-Series is the best-selling vehicle of any kind in the US (900,000 sold in 2001) and the Chevrolet Silverado is the second best-seller (700,000 sold in 2001). Dodge, a brand of DaimlerChrysler, sold 350,000 Ram pickups in 2001. In fact, two and a half times more full-size pickups than full-size SUVs were sold in the US in 2002.

Challenge

Japan's auto manufacturers are beginning to challenge the Big Three's domination of the lucrative pickup market by coming up with full-size pickups of their own. In 2001, Toyota launched the Tundra on the US market, which was well-received with 100,000 sales that year and this fall, Nissan is introducing the Titan.

In the Philippines, compact pickups like the Nissan Frontier, Isuzu Fuego, Mitsubishi L200, Toyota Hi-Lux and Ford Ranger outnumber the big pickups on the road not only because they cost less and consume less fuel, they are easier to park. The predominance of compact pickups here eases somewhat concerns over safety and the environment, for big pickups are the most dangerous vehicles on the road for people riding in other vehicles. When a big pickup collides with another vehicle, people in the second vehicle die at a rate of 293 for every 100,000 crashes. That is a deadlier rate than large SUVs, which kill people in the second vehicle at a rate of 205 per 100,000 crashes.

More dangerous

According to Mr. Hakim, big pickups are not only much more dangerous than large SUVs, they belch more gases that contribute to global warming. What's more, large pickups are gas hogs, averaging only 7 km per liter of fuel while the average SUV gets 7.5 km per liter and the average American car, 10.4 km per liter.

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

There was a time when pickups were plain, two-door utilitarian vehicles used purely for work. The transmission was manual and the only seat was a front bench seat that could accommodate three people including the driver. Nowadays, pickups are showboats equipped with automatic transmission, front bucket seats, a rear bench seat, climate control, leather upholstery, plush carpeting, radio/CD changer and other luxuries that used to be found only in high-end passenger cars.

Sobering costs

As Verlyn Klinkenborg, another New York Times editorial board member, notes: "In the past couple of years, pickups have become predominantly suburban vehicles, and they now reflect essentially suburban values: the need for family space, comfort and status—hang the price or the mileage. They have grown taller, heavier, more powerful and vastly more popular than they ever were before…

"I often marvel at America's excess utilitarian capacity, all those off-road vehicles that never go off-road, all those pickup trucks that never pick anything up. 'Be prepared' seems to be our motto, as if we might be called on to break a new frontier, instead of just carting home the groceries.

"If the new fashion in pickups were only a matter of appeasing our (predominantly masculine) vanity, that would be one thing. But as with SUVs, this new national fleet of pickups comes with sobering attendant costs, including serious harm to the cars they hit and low fuel mileage. As the comfort level of pickups changes for the better, their usage increases, as does the threat they pose to the environment and other drivers."

* * *

TYPO ERROR: In last week's column on the Nissan X-Trail, the word "elevated" should have been printed instead of "elected." The sentence should read as follows: "I found the elevated driving position very comfortable while providing excellent visibility."

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)

Are you driving distracted?

By Charles E. Buban

HOW often do you reach for something while behind the wheel? Do you have a habit of adjusting your radio, cassette or CD player while driving your vehicle?

If you are, then you're flirting with danger.

You are the type of driver who for one minute gives driving an undivided attention and the next, throws caution to the wind.

This is what authorities call as driving distracted or doing activities that take the driver's focus off the road, which could lead to serious injuries and even death.

"Driving should be a full-time job and requires a concentrated effort," said Antonio Mapa, president of Automobile Association of the Philippines.

Reduce vehicular accidents

"If we could just address the problem of driving distracted then we could substantially reduce the number of vehicular accidents and deaths related to it," Mapa added.

The 2000 annual report of the Philippine National Police recorded 13,158 traffic accidents involving 4,510 persons, 807 of whom were killed, 1,447 seriously injured, and 2,256 slightly injured.

In the United States, driving distracted is one hot issue considering some 42,000 people die on American highways every year, according to the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety that recently released a study on motorists' driving behavior.

The study, prepared by University of North Carolina researchers for the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, used cameras placed inside the cars of 70 volunteers to watch their driving behavior.

Oops, not the cell phone

Although it might come as a surprise, the study did not find cell phones to be the chief distraction. In fact, only 30 percent of the subjects used a cell phone while their car was moving.

ROAD CLOSED

Rather, its leaning over or reaching for something that turned out to be the most common distraction.

Ninety-seven percent of drivers do it.

Another top distraction for drivers is fiddling on radio, which accounts for 91.7 percent of the drivers studied.

Other revelations

Another revelation from the study indicated that babies, children and other adult passengers can be potential distractions, too.

Seventy-seven percent of test subjects carried on conversations while driving while eating or drinking comes close at 71.4 percent.

Smoking accounts only to 7.1 percent of most common distractions for drivers.

Researchers took a randomly selected three-hour span for each driver to gather the following results.

Some reminders

From the result, the AAA posted some reminders for drivers whenever they take charge of driving chore:

- Do your personal grooming at home, **not** in the car.
- Preset your favorite radio stations.
- Secure items that may move around when the car is moving.
- Pull safely off the road and out of traffic in order to deal with children.
- Avoid eating, drinking, smoking or reading while driving.
- Ask a passenger to help you with activities that may be distracting.
- Get off the road to place or answer cell phone calls or have a passenger take care of that for you.
- Always use your mirrors and your turn signals when turning, using the off/on ramps or changing lanes. Don't let anyone guess what you're going to do.
- Never cut in and out of traffic to save a little time. You might not get where you want to be at all.

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GMA lauds transmission makers at Honda plant

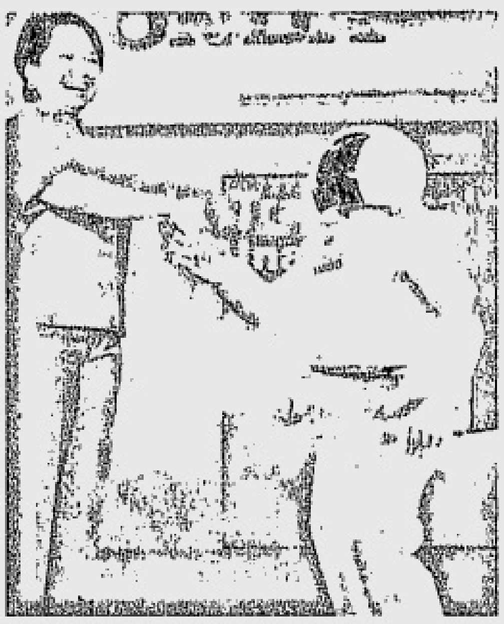
By Tessa R. Salazar

VEHICLES need transmission in order to run. Without it, a vehicle's engine cannot translate its power into motion, which is what a vehicle really is for.

The transmission allows the gear ratios between the engine and the drive wheels to change as the car speeds up or slows down. You shift gears so the engine stays below the potentially engine-damaging red line of your tachometer and within the optimum rpm band. Imagine driving a manual transmission car without the clutch—that's how important the transmission is to the car.

Valuable

And that's how valuable transmission makers and assemblers are to the auto industry as a whole.



PRESIDENT Macapagal and Asimo during a handshake

President Macapagal-Arroyo likewise acknowledged the relevance of transmission makers to the local economy when she motored 30 km south of Metro Manila to grace the opening of the new Honda transmission plant on Aug. 19.

Not only that the President dined and rubbed elbows with Honda Motor Co. president Takeo Fukui and its engineers but also she unveiled the 2-billion-yen plant at Laguna Technopark in Biñan, Laguna.

The plant can produce 140,000 manual transmission assemblies annually. The Honda plant is exporting manual transmission assemblies to other Honda plants in the Asean region, and will soon start exporting to Honda factories in other parts of Asia, Europe and North America. Forecast export earnings are at P3.2 billion annually.

GMA also shook hands with the jovial Asimo, Honda's walking humanoid robot.

2 PRESIDENTS. GMA with Fukui of Honda Motor

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Have an eco-friendly road trip

ENVIRONMENTALISM starts at home and while in your car, too. If you find yourself on the road with family or friends, you can do your share to contribute to clean surroundings. It all starts with a few simple steps:

- **Don't be a litterbug.** Have some handy sealable bags (to avoid smelly stink in your vehicle) where you and your passengers can put your snack wrappers, beverage cans and other disposable stuff, while on your journey. Keep in mind that instead of turning the roads ahead into a wasteland by throwing your junk out into the car window whenever you feel like it, you can do other communities a service by storing your trash and throwing it where it should be thrown.

- **Go for emission testing.** Let your vehicle undergo vehicle emissions inspection before you set out on your trip. The Department of Transportation and Communications, in cooperation with the Land Transportation Office, has accredited private emissions testing centers to properly conduct the test.

An authorized inspector/technician will hook up to your vehicle an exhaust gas sensor which would sniff out the vehicle's exhaust and report the levels of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons present in the vehicle's exhaust system, through a computer printout.

If your vehicle does not pass the test, get a car tune-up and hopefully, you will get a Certificate of Emission Compliance. Until then, you'll have to get your vehicle's exhaust system fixed.

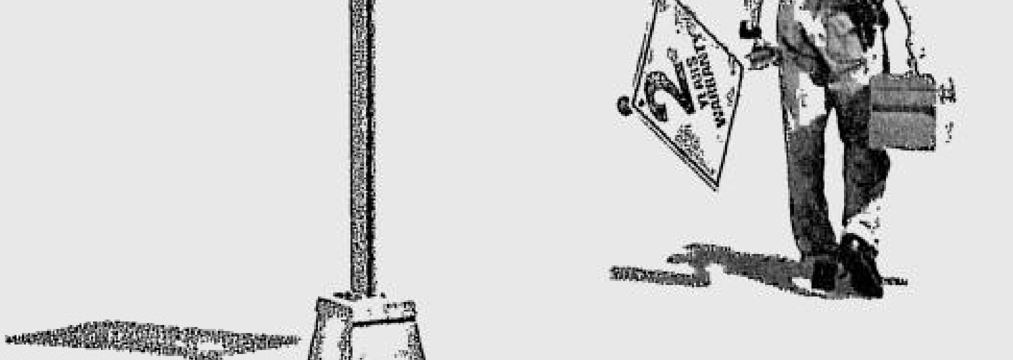
- **Use an eco-friendly engine oil.** A quality engine oil that's energy-conserving can be your best travel buddy. Choose a high-performance and fuel-efficient engine oil that lowers emissions and increases engine performance and longevity, like Polo Engine Oil.

The Polo Turbo XT engine oil is specially formulated with oxidation stabilizers and selected additives to help extend your engine's life, and provides protection from deposit buildup and sludge formation. On the other hand, the Polo Super XT Motor Oil is specially developed for diesel engines that use high sulfur fuels. Its high alkaline reserves guard against acid formation. It is formulated with highly refined base oils and selected additives that provide optimum engine performance, protection and easy maintenance.

Available at selected service stations, car dealers and auto supply stores, Polo Engine Oil prolongs mileage coverage and extends oil change intervals. It meets the American Petroleum Institute's tough energy-conserving standards. It reduces a large quantity of waste used-oil pollution and it helps maintain cleanliness in our environment, thereby reducing pollution.

- **Discard picnic leftovers.** When you make stopovers, or decide to have a picnic on a selected spot along the way with the whole brood or gang of friends, be sure to tidy up the place and throw collected leftovers, wrappers and other rubbish in the trash bins.

When you think about it, going eco-friendly while on the road does not require much effort nor resources on your part. It all boils down to self-discipline and a sense of awareness. Moreover, by doing your small share to help keep your environs clean, you are doing a huge service to your community.



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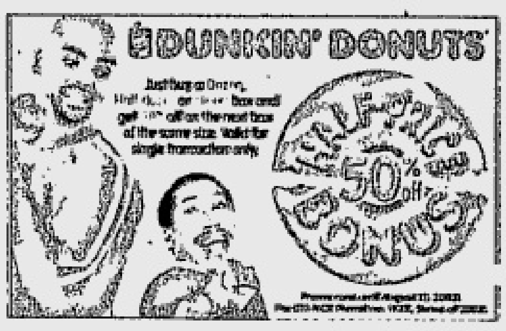


Bangus in her Eden

By Erlinda Enriquez Panlilio
Contributor

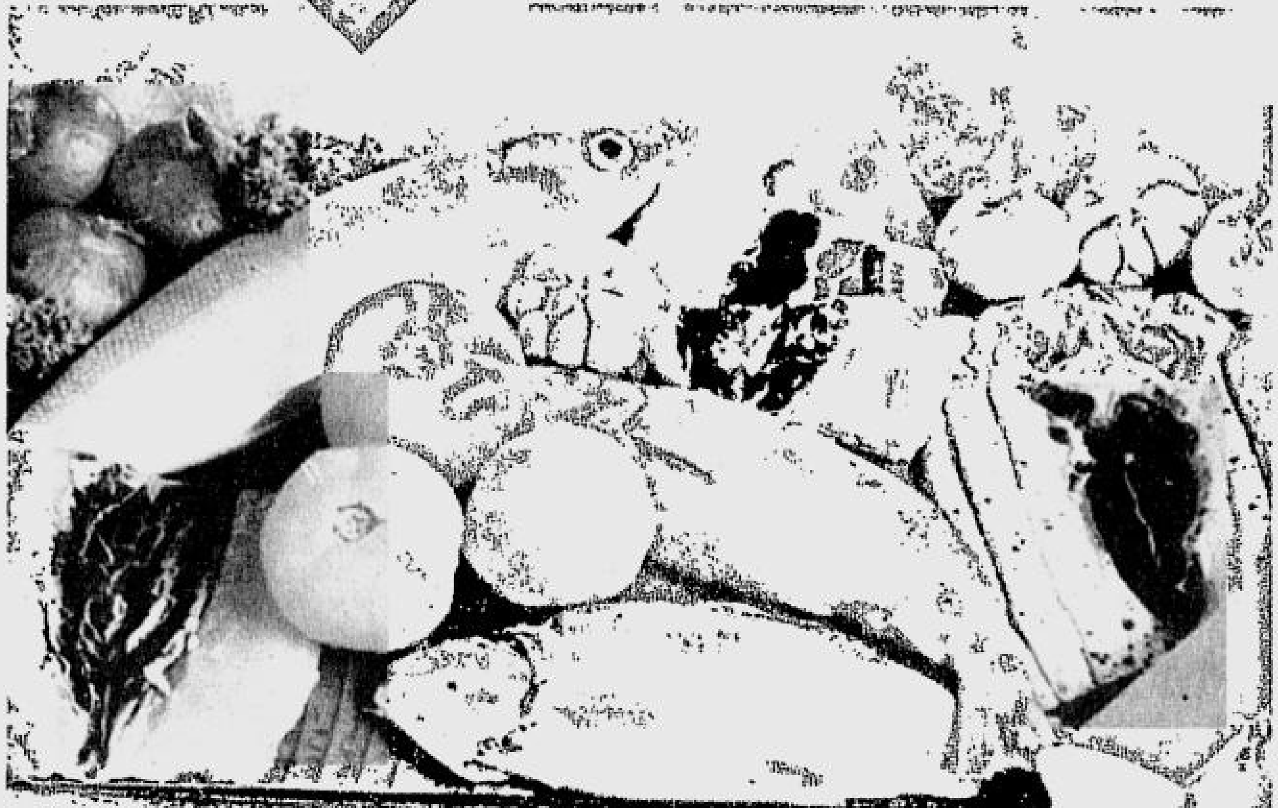
MY PARENTS left teaching at the end of World War II to set up a small coffee shop on Echague, which grew until it became a popular restaurant on T. Pinpin in Escolta. Famous newspaper people of the '50s (Teodoro Valencia, Joe Guevara, Joe Burgos, Joe Bautista, Enriqueta David Perez, Chino Roces, Cita Trinidad, etc.) frequented the place.

The restaurant was called the D & E for Diaz, my mother's maiden name, and my father's family name, Enriquez. At that time, my mother was also handling the service of 12 institutional cafeterias.

Everyone loved the D & E's Filipino cuisine. They could never have enough, it seemed, of the lumpiang ubod, pansit luglog, sinigang, pochero and kare-kare that our Bulakenyo chief cook, who was my father's relative, prepared each day.

My mother was up at 4 each morning to go

BANGUS/D2



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2) Sept. 6, 2003 - NEW CAKES, PASTRIES AND COOKIES - P3,000. Cooked Carrot Cake, Banana Cake, Peanut Butter, Coconut, Chocolate Chips & Chocolate Nut Cookies, Hopia, Siopao Oct. 11, 2003
3) Sept. 8, 9, 10, 11, 2003 / 8:30 am - 5pm - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD CAKE DECORATING - P8,500. New method of gumpaste, flowers, objects, marzipan, quilting, swags & ribbons, ribbon insertion, finest string works, lace pieces, fondant, chocolate fondant. Oct. 13, 14, 15, 16
4) Sept. 13 - LEARN SUGAR-FREE CAKES AND BREADS - P4,000. Banana Cake, Apple Almond Cake, Chocolate Walnut Cookies, Carrot Cake, All Wheat Bread & Raisin Bread. Oct. 18, 2003
5) Sept. 15, 16, 17, 18 / 8:30 am - 5:00 pm - COLD PORCELAIN FLOWER COURSES W/ RECIPE - P4,000 each. 1) Sampaguita, Sunflower, Waling-Waling 2) Rose, Catleya, Cymbidium 3) Magnolia, Gerbera, Lilies. 4) Open Rose, Hydrangea, Grapes. - (Each set are lessons covered for one day.)
6) Sept. 10, 2003 / 8 am - 5 pm - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT USING LACE MATS, NEW ROLLING PIN, SWAGS, RIBBONS & QUILTING - P3,000. Next schedule: Oct. 15, 2003
7) Sept. 20, 2003 - DRAGEE & RIBBON MAKING - P3,000. Make your own edible dragees pearl, silver, gold & any color, ribbon of any size using new textured rollers. Oct. 25, 2003
8) Sept. 15, 16, 17, 18, 2003 / 8 am - 5 pm - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - P10,500 (including ingredients). 30 recipes of the basic cakes, breads, pies, pastries and cookies Oct. 20, 21, 22, 23, 2003
9) Sept. 16, 17, 18, 19, 2003 / 8 am - 5 pm - COLD PORCELAIN DOLL 4 Day Course - P10,500. Make everlasting dolls using the latest technique in cold porcelain. Oct. 21, 22, 23, 24, 2003
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Ital-Pinoy Pasta Class: Aug. 30 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Pasta Gambas with variations, Pastel, Pasta Paprika, Kaldereta, Fresh Tuna Belly, Eggplant in Basil Sauce, Pasta Cacciatore, Herb Bread P800.
Cakeshop Specialties: Aug 30 (Sat) 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. Blackforest, Caramel Crunch, Sans Rival, Brazo de Mercedes, Crema de Fruta; Chocolate Custard Cake. P750.
Chinese Dimsum: Sept. 6 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Siopao, Cuapao, Steamed and Fried Dumplings, Siomai, Kekiam. Bonus: Almond Jelly. P700.
Basic Waitering & Bartending: Sept. 6 & 13 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Coverage: Creative techniques for efficient table-setting and attractive arrangement, napkin folding and skirting. Suggested selling techniques. Order taking, table set-up. Lecture on different wines and spirits classification, types of glasses, mixing and serving drinks, special pulutan. P2,000
Pinoy Fastfood (Carinderia, Pondohan, Lugawan, etc): Sept. 13 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Lecture on the technical and operational aspects of the business; hygiene, sanitation & safety; costing and actual cooking demonstration of popular low cost fastfood recipes; different kinds of Lomi, Pork Asado, Fresh & Fried Lumpia, Pancit Malabon, Adobong Pusit, different kinds of BBQ, Cycle menu sampler, use of extenders, etc. P1,500 with free lunch.
Restaurant Operations: Sept. 20 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Kitchen organization, cycle menu planning, costing, cost control, purchasing, labor, payroll, inventory, and restaurant works, proven techniques on profitable service operations with free lunch. P1,500
Bakery & Bakeshop: Sept. 20 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Commercial methods used in preparing breads, pies and cakes including costing, production batching with actual hands-on. P1,500.
Pasta Classics: Sept. 27 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lasagna, Chicken Canneloni; assorted pasta dishes and sauces (Garlic Fettucini, Carbonara, Puttanesca, Pesto and Negra). Homemade fresh pasta making. P700

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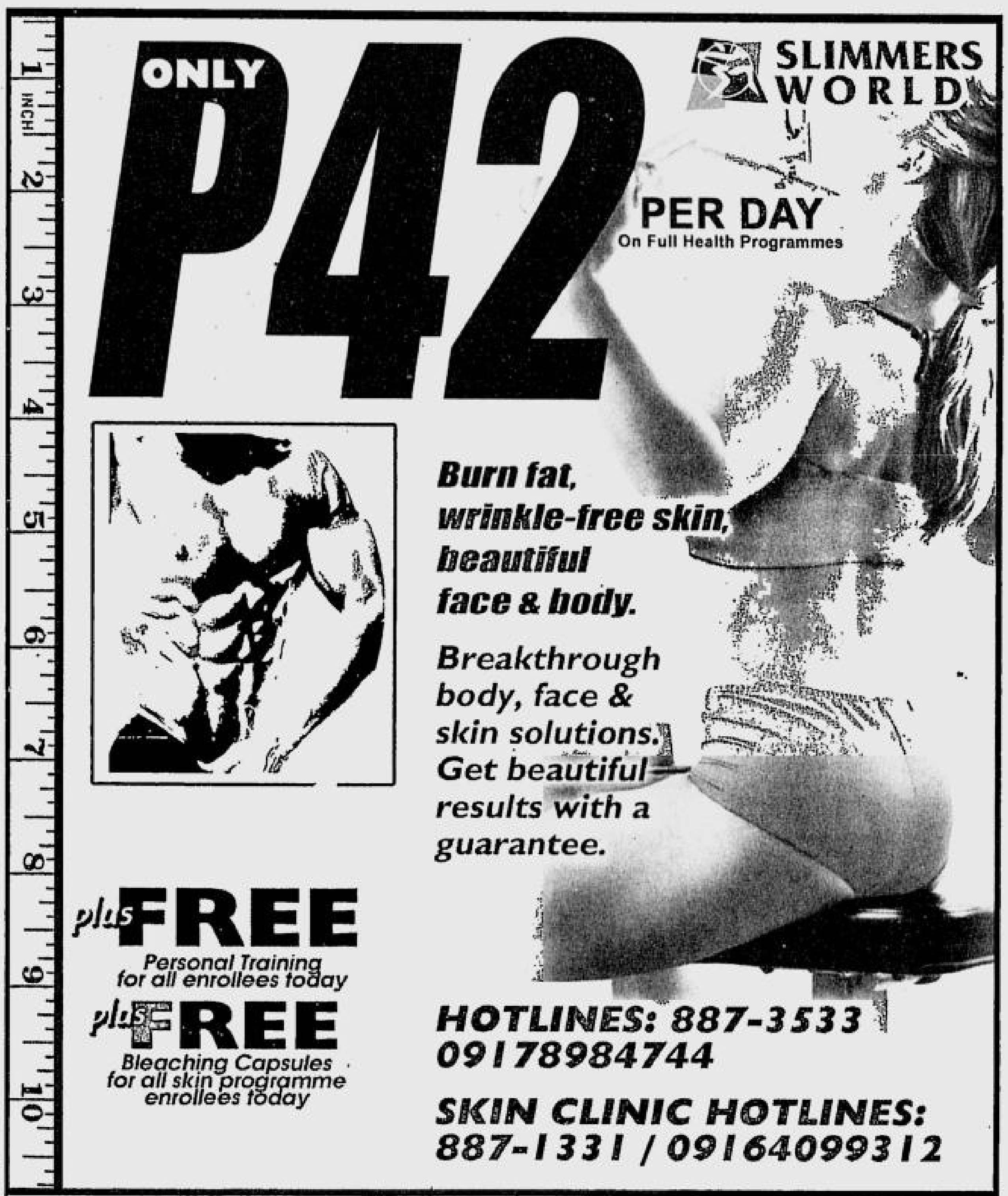
Cooking I (Basic). For Messmen, Stewards and Beginners: Sept. 2 - 5 or 16 - 19 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Basic food preparation, cooking methods for vegetables, pasta, meats and poultry dishes; Techniques of de-boning chicken and fish; Basic garnishing. Actual preparation of popular Filipino and Oriental dishes. P2,500.
Cooking II (Comprehensive Cooking) For Career Cooks: Sept. 2 - 5 or 16 - 19 (T-F) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Coverage: Food hygiene & sanitation, Standard techniques of preparing basic stocks, soups and sauces applicable to 1001 recipes; salads and dressing; main dishes; potato cookery; pasta and rice; techniques of de-boning and filleting fish and chicken; use of herbs and spices to cooking; basic garnish for plate and platter presentation. Free lunch. P3,000.
Baking I (Basic): Sept. 10 - 12 or 24 - 26 (W-F) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Techniques in preparing basic pie crust, different types of cakes, quick bread, yeast breads and more. P2,000
Cake Decorating (Basic): Sept. 27 & Oct. 4 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Lecture-workshop on fundamentals of cake decorating; coloring, designing, template, icing (boiled, butter, caramel, chocolate, sugar icing); basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flower making and bunching and motif. Free decorating tips. P2,000.

For Inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at
8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108, or e-mail us at *mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph*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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2173, Series of 2003

Bangus in her Eden

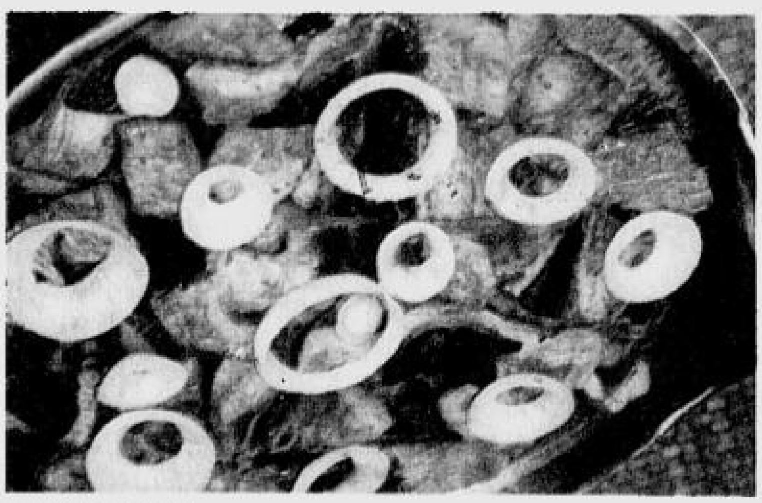
From page D1

to the Quiapo market. I went to bed often without seeing her, but I knew she kissed me when she got home. My *yaya* Nila put me to sleep with her fantastic tales of the adventures of Doña Juana, Señorita Maria and the dashing princes who fell in love with them against the king's wishes.

During the day, I was left in the care of the maids who followed the radio serials, "Ilaw ng Tahanan," "At Noon" and "Gulong ng Palad" at 5 p.m. I enjoyed listening with them to the adventures of Prinsipe Amante, who always asked the enchantress Buruka for advice, at 6 p.m.

Simple dishes

The maids found it convenient to serve me simple dishes like fried *bangus*, pork chops, *tinolang manok* and sautéed vegetables—cabbage, *sayote*, *upo*, *sitaw* or whatever was available in the house. I became particularly fond of *bangus* and watched the cook as she salted several slices of the fish.



SLICES of *bangus* belly cooked with soy sauce and onions

THE FAT belly

As soon as a dollop of white Purico shortening melted on the black frying pan, she would put the *bangus* slices, causing the pan to sizzle. The fat belly would jiggle slightly as it cooked in the hot oil.

Because the cook was distracted by the radio drama, the *bangus* would often be a bit burnt. But I didn't mind, because it was crispy. Even the thinly cut pork chops, when she cooked them, were a dark golden brown, the fat crisp to the bite. I just loved the crick, crack sounds of the *bangus* skin and the burnt pork chop rind as I chewed.

Milkfish, or *bangus*, were small and thin then, so it was easy to eat a whole fish. (My mommy always encouraged me to eat fish, saying it was brain food.) In those days, boneless *bangus* was not yet available, so that many a time I choked on a tiny fishbone. When that happened, my *yaya* would make me swallow a piece of banana or a spoonful of rice without chewing, to be followed with a gulp of water. She would also summon one of the neighbor's maids, who was born in a breech position, to massage my nape and throat. The maids believed such a person could remove the offending fishbone.

Alone but not lonely

I usually ate alone at the eight-seat dining table in our house on Kamuning Road because my younger brother was never home. He would be out with his friends catching *gagamba* (spiders) or playing *holen* (marbles). I didn't mind eating alone because then I had the fried *bangus* all to myself, especially the fatty head and the luscious black belly. How I wished the fish was all belly! Papa liked these parts, too, so that when we dined together, mostly on Sundays, we children had to defer to him.

Papa was fussy with food. He must have acquired his taste from his mother, who had a home-cooked food business in Meycauayan, Bulacan. He liked to cook certain dishes himself. One of his favorites was Sinigang na Bangus sa Bayabas. We had a fecund guava tree in our backyard, which bore fruits that were pink inside. When the fruits were ripe, he would have them picked then he would go to the Kamuning market to buy fresh *bangus*. He always checked the gills to make sure they were a bright red color. The flesh had to be firm but a little bouncy to the touch.

He would boil the guavas in the second "rice washing" (the water used in washing the rice for the second time). When soft, he would remove the guavas, mash them, take out the seeds and set aside the cooked fruits. Then he would put radish into the water, followed a little later by the *bangus* slices, one or two green chilies (*siling haba*), one small white onion and *kangkong* leaves, with just a few tender shoots or stalks. He would add the tender guavas last.

Guaranteed appetizer

The house would be filled with the fragrant, soothing aroma of the guavas. It never failed to whet my appetite, even when I was not feeling well. Papa always tasted the dish he was cooking and adjusted the seasoning, adding a little *patis* or salt as needed. He did not have to call me to the dining table when he cooked Sinigang sa Bayabas. I would be there, mouth watering, waiting for my portion of *bangus*. This sinigang had no sour flavor, because no *sampalok* or *kamias* was added. The ripe guavas gave it a sweetish taste, and just a hint of sourness from the skin. (The big guavas sold these days are not suitable for *sinigang*. They don't impart the same flavor as the small native fruits.)

I loved the pinkish color of the sinigang soup. The dish was a total dining experience, appealing to the senses-sight, smell, and taste.

Father also liked to cook Paksiw na Bangus, insisting on using Paombong vinegar that is made from the *nipa* palm. This wasn't always easy to get. (I find Datu Puti vinegar a suitable substitute. The Arengga vinegar made in Cavite from the sugar palm is wonderful, too, giving a slightly sweetish flavor.) If I had a cold, the vinegar, ginger and green peppers in the *paksiw* never failed to ease it. But it was the taste of the luscious belly, soft and smooth in its fatness, that gave me a sense of well-being. I felt whole and comforted eating it.

I love *bangus* in all its forms: *tinapa*, *daing*, *relleno*, *tocho*, *sinigang*, cooked with soy sauce and onions, or just plain fried. It reminds me of my father and of the times we shared together as a family, mostly on Sundays when my parents' D & E would be closed.

We sat down to dinner cooked by my father or mother, who never heard the end of Papa's playful criticism of her bland Visayan cooking. Bangus was one of the dishes we always had. On Sundays, the fish would be stuffed with chopped tomatoes and onions, and broiled. It would be paired with Sinigang na Baboy or with another of papa's favorite Bulacan dishes, Hinalog na Manok sa Sampalok.

Someday I must write a poem on *bangus*, the one constant in my life, the indestructible, nutritious, satisfying, versatile fish that has sustained me since childhood. My vision of Eden would be breakfast of boneless Tinapang Bangus with Sinangag (garlic fried rice), and scrambled eggs with onions and tomatoes. Lunch would be Sinigang na Bangus sa Bayabas, and dinner would be Rellenong Bangus.

The *bangus* would be all belly in my Eden.

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SEPTEMBER SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

Sept. 02, Tues. – FAVORITE COOKIES AND BARS 1. Chef Junjun presents scrumptious baked goodies he grew up with like Nutty Butterscotch Bars, Oatmeal Mango Cookies; Honey Orange Bars, Rocky Road Bar, Amaretti Cookies and Neiman's Mistake for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sept. 03, Wed. – EXQUISITE CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAYS 1. Herb Dipping Sauce, Raspberry Butter, Zucchini Bread, Mango Chutney Dressing, Café de Paris Sauce, Rich Brownies and Graham Cracker Cake are the recipes from Chef Junjun that you can use in time for the holidays. For P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sept. 06, Sat. – THAI FAVORITES 1. Bangkok Chef Chariya Thaikupt will teach her favorite Thai dishes like Tom Yam, Paad Thai, Chicken Pandan, Chicken Green Curry and Tako in Pandan leaves. P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sept. 07, Sun. – SAUSAGE WORKSHOP 2. Chef Gene teaches his favorite exotic sausages like Fresh Pork Sausage with Apple and Dried Onion, Italian Sausage with 3 Cheeses and Red Wine, Duck Sausage with Fresh Sage and Roasted Garlic, Greek Sausage Loukanika, Tuscan Sausage, Nurmberg Sausage and Sweet Italian Sausage. The workshop includes introductory set such as funnel, praque powder, accord powder and casing for P880.00 from 9:00 – 12:00 noon.

Sept. 11, Thurs. – THAI FAVORITES 2. The recipes from Thai Chef Chariya Thaikupt, Tom Kha Talay, Bagoong Rice, Roasted Duck Curry, Crispy Catfish with Green Mango Salad, Thai Halo-halo at P1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Recipes include all ingredients.

Sept. 12, Fri. – COMMERCIAL BREADS. Learn bread-making with Chef Anna Baluyot (Pastry Chef and Cake Designer) the recipes of Pan de Sal, Ensaimada, Pan de Limon, French Bread Rolls, Ube Roll and Cheesy Cup Cake from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients for P1,500.00.

Sept. 13, Sat. – EVERYBODY LOVES CHICKEN 1. Chicken dishes from Chef Junjun for the whole family to enjoy. Chicken Perrins, Dutch Oven Roast Chicken, Spanish Chicken Stew, Chicken Teriyaki, Oven BBQ Chicken and Pollo Parmigiana for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 9:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Sept. 14, Sun. – PINOY KAKANIN 1. Pinoy Kakanin recipes from Chef David such as Pichi-piching Kamoteng Kahoy, Pichi-piching Green Pinipig, Sapin-sapin, Puto, Puto (Flour) and Kalamay na Kalabasa for P1,000.00 from 10:00 – 200 p.m. including all ingredients.

Sept. 15, Mon. – BETINA'S UNIQUE RECIPES. Stand out when you have guests using these unique recipes from Betina Legarda. The recipes include Barcelona Fish Soup with Ale Oli Compote, Salt Cod Layered Salad, Colored Peppers, Pine Nuts and Tuna Medley, Chorizo-Eggs Salmorejo Style, Squid and Bean Basque Platter and Peaches with Merengue for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 2:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

Sept. 16, Tues. – LOW AND SUGAR-FREE DESSERTS. This time let Chef Gino teaches you easy to follow Low and Sugar-Free Desserts The recipes are Coffee Pannacotta, Chocolate Ice Cream, Crème Brulee, Chocolate Souffle, Coffee Jelly with Orange Cream and Crepes with Amaretto Crème and Chocolate Sauce for P1,200 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

Sept. 18, Thurs. – NOCHE BUENA FEAST. Chef Gino will teach you simple and delicious holiday dishes served during Noche Buena. Recipes include Lengua con Setas, Roast Rib-eye with Onion Gravy, Spanish Style Roast Turkey, Cannelloni and Prawns Thermidor for P1,500.00 from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

Sept. 19, Fri. – PINOY KAKANIN 3. New set of native delicacies from Chef David Fajardo, the recipes are Espasol, Bibingkang Cassava, Kalakang Kamoteng Kahoy, Kalamay Ube, Calabasa Flan with Honey Butter Sauce for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 2:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

Sept. 20, Sat. – SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE 2. A sequel to Ms. Marianne de Leon, the cookbook author and culinary demonstrator's no fuss entertainment meal. Pumpkin Soup with Basil, Baked Lamb Shanks, Chocolate Zucchini Cake, Fruits and Lettuce in Mustard Dressing and more recipes you will enjoy in this afternoon class. The fee is P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m NEW CLASS.

Sept. 21, Sun. – PAELLAS AND RISOTTOS 1. Paella and risotto recipes from Chef Gene that is easy to do. Recipes include Wild Mushroom and Saffron Risotto with Parmesan Cheese; Seafood Risotto with Proscuitto; Paella ala Majorcana; Arroz con Mariscos; Squid Ink Paella for P880.00 including all ingredients from 9:00 – 12:00 noon.

Sept. 22 – 23, Mon. - Tues. – SIMPLE SUSHI & SASHIMI WORKSHOP 1 & 2 This two-day Sushi and Sashimi Workshop of Chef Aoki from Osaka, Japan where the student will learn simple and basic sushi and sashimi making that you can do and serve to your family and friends. Trimming of Tuna, Sushi Rice, Tekkadon, California Rolls, Lapu-lapu Uzusukuri, Tuna Temaki, Tekka Temaki and Kani Sarada Temaki for the 1st day while on the 2nd day, you will learn How to Trim Flat Fish, Rainbow Roll, Futo Makiroll, Gari, Aji and Tamago. Recipes include ingredients for P3,000.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sept. 24, Wed. – PATE, MOUSSES AND SPREADS 1. Recipes from Chef Junjun that can be used as a gift for the coming holidays, the recipes are Chicken Liver Paté; Mortadella and Cornichon Spread; Crabfat Tapenade, Walnut and Pecorino Smear; Laura's Smoked Fish Spread and Quesong Puti Pamahid for P1,200.00 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

Sept. 25, Thurs. – HOMEMADE HOLIDAY GIFTS 1. Chef Gino will teach bottled goodies that are perfect for Christmas give-aways. Recipes include Puttanesca, Salsa, Nacho Cheese Dip, Cilantro Pesto, Classic Pesto, Salad Dressing, Toblerone Fondue and many more. Gift wrapping ideas included for P1,200.00 including ingredients from 10:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Sept. 26, Fri. – PATE, MOUSSES AND SPREADS 2. A sequel to Chef Junjun's class, here's another set of Christmas giveaways for you to learn The recipes are Tonnato Spread; Chicken Liver Pate with Green Peppercorns; Crab and Artichoke Spread; Baked Eggplant with 2 Cheeses; Spinach and Mushroom Boursin and Red Caviar and Lemon Smear for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m

Sept. 27, Sat. – SUNDAY DISHES. Delicious hearty and family meals is what Chef Gene offers such as Lengua Sulpeña, Pescado con Mayonesa, Callos, Roast Chicken with Apples and White Sausage Stuffing with Caramelized Onion Sauce, Baked Leeks with Gruyere and Sopa de Flan for P980.00 from 9:00 – 12:00 noon including all ingredients.

Sept. 28, Sun. – SIMPLE CHINESE MEAL FOR THE HOME 2. Dishes with exotic flavours from the east have never been this easy with Chef Gene's stir-fry method Recipes include Deep Fried Bean Curd with Hidden Treasure; Bean Curd and Glass Noodle Soup; Steamed Eggs, Glass Noodles and Dried Shrimps; Fried Prawns with Curry Leaves; Fragrant Golden Chicken and Spicy Fish Fillet with Black Bean Sauce and Leeks for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 9:00 – 12:00 noon. NEW CLASS.

Sept. 29, Mon – BETINA'S CATERING DISHES. Let Betina Legarda share some of her catering dishes, the recipes are Cadiz Fish Soup, Andalucian White Bean Salad, Mediterranean Vegetable Casserole, Paella with Lima Beans and Herbs, Peppered Chicken in Sherry Sauce and Lychee White Salad for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 2:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2, Tues – Thurs. – BASIC PASTRY WORKSHOP, PIES, TARTS, QUICHES AND CHEESECAKES. Three days of hands-on workshop where student will learn all types of pie dough, flaky pie dough, sweet pie dough, cookie dough, quiche dough, and other forms of crust used in traditional and contemporary desserts as well as savory concoctions: Caramel Walnut Pie, Oreo Cheesecake, Three Mushroom Quiche, Fruit Tarts, Banana Peanut Butter Tart are just some of the pie creations that will be made and taught by Chef Junjun de Guzman for P4,800.00 including all ingredients, manual and apron from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

New ways with 'sinigang'

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

RECENTLY, I conducted cooking demonstrations for Nestlé in a shopping mall. The cooking demonstrations featured the company's new products in the market such as the Maggi Tinola Cube and the Maggi Tomato and Meat Cube.

Showcased were different *sinigang* recipes with unusual combinations of ingredients such as beef with banana heart and *pechay*, pork *pata* with banana blossoms and *camote* tops and beef *litid* with *alugbati*.

You can add these recipes to your repertoire of soup dishes. The unusual *sinigang* recipes illustrate that a simple, standard dish can be jazzed up to turn it into something unusual, nutritious yet delicious.

For working moms, I would recommend that the meat be boiled and tenderized a day before, chilled overnight and then reheated with the vegetables the following day for hassle-free cooking. Chilling the meat with the stock also allows fat to float to the surface.

Those watching their fat intake can just remove the fatty layer before reheating and adding the vegetables for a healthy low-fat, high-fiber *sinigang*. People in a hurry may use the pressure cooker to tenderize the meat.

No matter how you choose to cook your *sinigang*, with the rains falling almost every afternoon, a bowl of hot, steaming *sinigang* will always be a welcome treat for dinner.

Beef Knuckle Sinigang

1 kg beef knuckles, cut into serving pieces
16 c water
½ c quartered tomatoes
½ c quartered onions
2 c sliced *puso ng saging*
2 c *pechay Tagalog*, cut up
3 pc long green chili
2 (25g) packs Maggi Sinigang sa Sampalok with Gabi

Combine the first four ingredients in a pot and boil over low flame until meat is tender, adding more water if necessary.

Add the rest of the ingredients at an interval of 2 minutes between each addition. Stir in *sinigang* mix.

Sinigang na Pata

1 kg *pata ng baboy*
12 c water
½ c quartered tomatoes
½ c quartered onions
15 strands *bulaklak ng saging*
2 c *talbos ng kamote*
3 pcs long green chili
2 (25g) packs Maggi Sinigang sa Sampalok with Gabi

Boil *pata* in enough water to cover meat. Throw away the water.

Add the next three ingredients to the meat in a pot and boil over low flame until meat is tender, adding more water if necessary.

Add the rest of the ingredients at 2 minutes interval between each addition. Stir, in *sinigang* mix.

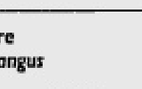
Sinigang na Litid at Alugbati

12 c water
½ c quartered tomatoes
½ c quartered onions
½ kilo beef *litid*
2 c *alugbati* leaves
3 pcs long green chili
25-g pack Maggi Sinigang sa Sampalok with Gabi

Combine the first four ingredients in a pot and boil over low flame until meat is tender, adding more water if necessary.

Add the rest of the ingredients at 2 minutes interval between each addition. Stir in *sinigang* mix.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating lessons at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City. Call 7217735.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Cereal and milk Bread Butter and cheddar cheese Corned beef omelet Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea	Beef Knuckle Sinigang *Lumpiang togue* Rice Mango gelatin 	Instant hot and sour soup Salad greens with oriental vinaigrette Steamed white chicken Rice Sliced oranges
TUESDAY	Waffles with butter and maple syrup Crispy bacon Coffee, hot chocolate or fruit juice	Cucumber salad Fried fish steaks with sweet and sour sauce Beef steak Rice Ice cream 	Spaghetti carbonara Garlic bread Fried chicken wings Peaches with ice
WEDNESDAY	Beef *tapa* Rice Coffee, hot chocolate or fruit juice	Instant chicken and corn soup Green salad Pork *adobo* Rice Bananas a la mode 	Roast chicken Vegetable *chopsuey* Rice Blueberry cheeesecake
THURSDAY	Oatmeal *Pandesal* Cheese platter Vienna sausage Coffee or hot chocolate Fresh fruit cocktail	Steamed fish with *tausi* and spring onions Steamed baby *bok choy* with oyster sauce Black *gulaman* 	Sinigang na Litid with Alugbati Rice Fresh fruit platter
FRIDAY	Cereal and milk *Monay* Butter, cheese spread, coco jam Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea	Caesar salad Beef stew Rice Banana split	Clear soup Chicken pastel Rice Leche flan
SATURDAY	Garlic rice Fried *danggit* Salted egg and tomato salad Papaya with *calamansi*	Sinigang na Pata Rice *Minatamis na camote* with *sago* 	Coleslaw Arroz ala cubana Fruit salad
SUNDAY	*Kesong puti* Gourmet *tuyo* *Pan de sal* Hot coffee, hot chocolate or fresh fruit shake	*Kare kare* *Inihaw na bangus* Rice Assorted *kakanin* 	*Pesang manok* Rice Maja blanca

Poor restaurant service leaves bad taste in the mouth

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

IT'S time once again to call the attention of food servers about proper customer relations, as well as food safety and good hygiene. If our e-mail is any indication, service in food establishments is not improving.

Paz Atienza (address available on request) reminds a franchisee of McDonald's in San Juan that the mother company of this fastfood chain in the United States puts a high premium on quality and proper procedures. And that, she says, includes handling of money.

She wrote, "It has become a daily habit of my friends and I to take our breakfast at McDonald's. More often than not, we are quite happy about the service… until one morning when a girl server at the counter placed my change, a P20 bill, right on top of the plastic fork, knife and stirrer on my tray!

"I immediately asked her to replace the items including the napkins under the utensils. She did... but with a pout and a smirk. To think that she [has] the name of McDonald's on her uniform." (We like to point out that the same server who takes orders and accepts the payment also places the food items on the tray with bare hands.)

Here's a feedback from Apple T. (apple_ana@yahoo.com): "When you order sundae on-the-go, don't expect the same generous serving [as in]... McDo advertisements. The actual serving you get at some branches does not even reach the rim of the plastic cup. Servers don't seem to be aware that caps of containers for sundae take-out are specially made to provide ample space for the tip of the sundae. One feels cheated (and irked) specially when the server pouts if you ask them to fill the cup."

Extra charge

Apple T. also has the following comments: "The garlic rice of the *longanisa* meal tastes like plain rice, unlike the tasty garlic rice at Jollibee. The two branches I patronize don't have suggestion boxes. Moreover, they charge for extra gravy, unlike Wendy's and Kentucky. I suggest that they assign a waiter to ask diners if they need extra rice so customers don't have to queue for that extra order, particularly during peak hours."

A reader from England (zedvilla15@aol.com) recounted her experience when, on a visit to the Philippines, she brought her mother, son and nephew to Max's restaurant branch in Shangri-La mall.

She wrote: "A waitress took our orders, then evidently forgot all about us. We patiently waited, but when it was quite obvious that our orders wouldn't be coming, we complained to the headwaiter. He didn't seem to know what to do. Hungry and exasperated, we just told him to cancel our orders. We hied off to the next restaurant. Had we listened to the kids' suggestion to go to Jollibee, we would have been spared the agony."

Dennis Lee of Baguio City has some suggestions for the local franchisee of Mister Donut that supplies to branches in Baguio and Benguet. "Add more fillings to the donuts. The ones we bought had very skimpy fillings. Took us three bites to get a taste of them. I hope the franchise owners realize this. With just a peso or two over the price of a donut, I'm better off with a hamburger. At least you can see the burger patty in the buns." (Lee has been crazy over donuts since he was a kid.)

'Burned' in resto

Arminda Muga has this tip to Thai-in-a-Box at SM City: "Give customers a choice of chili-less dishes." She had lunch with her husband and 2-year-old kid in the Thai restaurant. She chose what she thought was a chili-less chicken with ginger and garlic for her and her kid, instead of a similar dish with pepper. When the order was served, however, it had lots of hot peppers. The server told her that chicken dishes were cooked that way in the restaurant.

"The manager was not responsive to our complaint and didn't even offer to replace the hot dish with a mild one for me and my kid. I paid for the food even though I was not able to eat it. I reported the incident to the head office of the restaurant. The person who answered was courteous and promised that someone from management would call me back. They have not done so to this day."

Diane Figueras advises senior citizens to bring the original copy of their privilege discount cards all the time. Aristocrat Restaurant, for one, will not honor photocopies of senior citizen's discount cards even if it is a faithful reproduction of the original.

She wrote: "Aristocrat has always been special to me and my family. It brings back fond memories of my happy childhood in Paco [near] where the restaurant has remained a well-patronized and respected institution. My 79-year-old father, who has a travel agency in the area, remains a faithful patron, and eats there twice a week."

All that loyalty changed, however, when the cashier refused to honor her father's senior citizen's discount card. All because it was a photocopy of the original card. The argument that followed left an unpleasant aftertaste for the Figueras family.

Ma. Anna de Leon (maandel@hotmail.com) bought a bar of chocolate at the Alabang supermarket last July 12. "I ate the chocolate right after purchase, but after two bites, I saw two worms in the bar! The expiration date on the package was September 2003. When I showed the infested chocolate bar to the lady at the customer service counter, she casually told me to replace it with any item equivalent to the price of the chocolate."

Good service

We end this column on a happy note. Robert Tagle (robertt@phm.gov.au) writes all the way from Australia of fond memories from his recent visit to the Philippines: "Last March, I brought in a multi-system VCR from Sydney that needed an adaptor to function. I discovered Handyman Hardware store at the Ali Mall and was pleasantly surprised that the store staff (from security guards to the general hands) were courteous, helpful and generous with advice. Actually, I was a bit embarrassed with all the fuss they accorded me for a very insignificant item that cost less than a hundred pesos."

Tagle commends store clerk Lelanie Gomilla of the electrical section. "If only that kind of service can be replicated in all commercial and government establishments all over the country. I am writing the management to thank the store staff, Ms Gomilla in particular. Interestingly, the piece of paper where I wrote the store's address and her name is still intact and I am looking at it this very moment."

Your favorite burger at lower prices

UNTIL Sept. 15, snack time at Jollibee becomes even more delicious and affordable with the "Jollibee Yumania."

At select hours of the day, the "langhap-sarap" Regular Yum is available for only P15, or P5 off the regular price.

This value for money offer is available every day, from 9-11 a.m., 2-4 p.m. and 8 p.m. until closing time.

"Our customers always come first. This is why we continue to come up of ways to make the Jollibee experience more accessible to our consumers. With the 'Yumania' promo, customers get even more value for their money on their favorite Regular Yum burger," said Joel Villamayor, Jollibee promotions manager.

Pizza and chips go well together

THIS August and September, avail of free Regular Pepperoni Pan Pizza worth P68 from Pizza Hut every time you buy any Frito Lay snack.

Just present empty packs of two Frito Lay Big Bags containing the promo ticker when you dine at Pizza Hut and get a regular Pepperoni Pan Pizza absolutely free.

You can also present three empty Frito Lay midsize packs or four empty small packs to enjoy a 50 percent discount whenever you order a regular Pepperoni Pan Pizza.

You can avail of these freebies and great discounts at all Pizza Hut restaurants nationwide.

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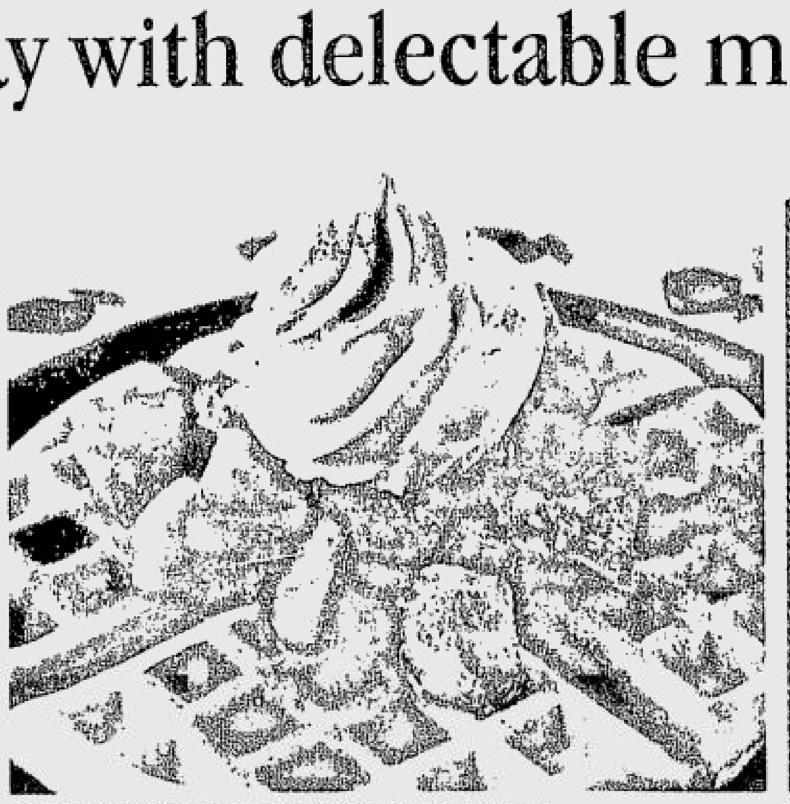
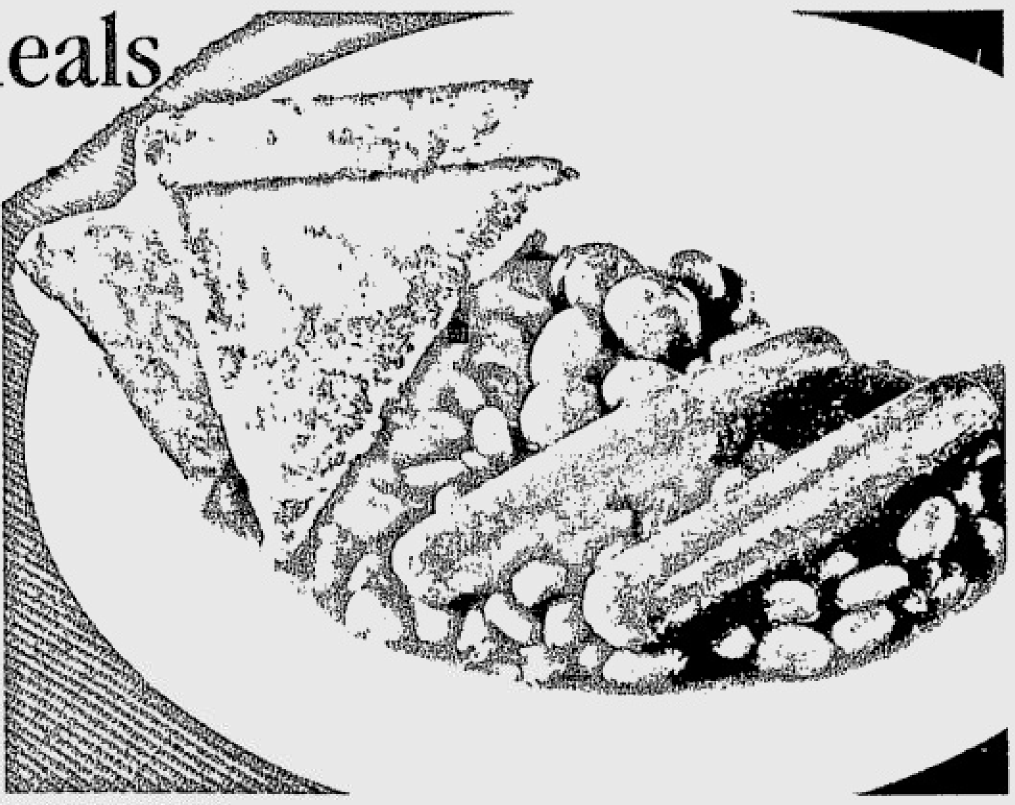


AMERICAN Waffle with Apple Cinnamon Topping



ENGLISH Breakfast

English Breakfast

Purefoods Chick N' Tasty
Purefoods Pork and Beans
eggs, sunny side-up
white bread, toasted
Magnolia Gold Butter
button mushroom

Pan fry Purefoods Chick N' Tasty and set aside. Heat pork and beans in a saucepan. Set aside. In another pan, sauté mushrooms in butter, season with salt and pepper.

To serve, place toast with butter, eggs, mushrooms, and pork and beans on a plate. Add Chick N' Tasty on top of beans. Serve immediately.

Filipino Breakfast

1 pack Monterey Regional Longanisa (a choice of Lucban, Hamonado, Vigan and Alaminos)
garlic rice
¼ c Star Margarine Garlic
4 c cooked rice
2 tbsp garlic, chopped and fried
Red egg salad:
2 pcs red eggs, chopped
½ c tomato, chopped
¼ c onion, chopped
2 tbsp cilantro, chopped

Cook *longanisa* according to package directions.

For the rice, melt margarine in a pan and add cooked rice. Mix well. Garnish with fried garlic before serving.

For salad, mix all ingredients together.

Makes 4 servings.

American Waffle with Apple Cinnamon Topping

¼ c Magnolia Gold Butter, melted
2 pcs eggs, separate whites
1 ½ c all-purpose flour
3 tsp baking powder
3 tbsp sugar
1 ¼ c milk
1 tsp vanilla
Apple topping:
¼ c Magnolia Gold Butter
2 pcs red apples, peeled and cubed
1/3 c brown sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
whipped cream

Sift flour, salt and baking powder. In a bowl, combine the flour mixture and sugar and make a well in the center. Drop in the egg yolks stirring gradually, drawing in the flour from the edges. Add milk, vanilla and melted butter. Whisk the egg whites until stiff but not dry and fold into batter.

For apple cinnamon toppings, melt butter in a pan and peeled apples. Sprinkle with sugar and simmer for four minutes. Add cinnamon.

To serve, top waffle with apple toppings and garnish with a dollop of whipped cream. Makes 4 servings.

Congee

1 c short-grain rice (Intan rice)
12 c water
2 tsp ginger, grated
6 pcs egg
15 pcs wanton wrappers, cut into thin strips
1 pack Monterey Meat Pops
1 (50g) bag Monterey Chicharons, chopped
spring onions

Combine rice and water in a large stock pot. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat to simmer. Cook for 1½ hours. When the congee is cooked, stir in the ginger.

Deep fry wanton wrappers and set aside. Cook meat pops according to package directions.

To serve, place congee in a bowl, add an egg, chopped *chicharon*, meat pops and spring onions. Serve hot. Makes 6 servings.

Chilaquiles (Mexican Egg Dish)

¼ c onions
½ c green bell peppers
¼ k Magnolia Chicken Giniling
¼ c tomato sauce
½ c paprika
½ c chili powder
¼ c cayenne pepper
4 pcs egg, slightly beaten
2 pcs flour tortilla, cut into strips
¼ c Magnolia Quickmelt Cheese, grated

Sauté onions, green bell peppers and Magnolia Chicken Giniling. Add tomato sauce and season with paprika, chili powder and cayenne pepper. Set aside.

In another pan, add oil and fry tortilla strips until mildly crispy. Scramble the eggs, season with salt and pepper and pour into tortilla strips. Cook for about 6-8 minutes, add the chicken mixture and sprinkle with grated cheese. Makes 2 servings.

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- 2 free non-redemption games for every P300 powercard purchase at Timezone.
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- One free cinema pass for every one-time purchase of 3 movie tickets at Glorietta 1, Glorietta 4, Greenbelt 1 from August 29-31.
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- Check out the special offers from the following hotels from August 29-31:

Hotel Intercontinental Manila	815-9711
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SAN Isidro market vendors now get their *itlog na maalat* from Kalipi

These San Isidro women have found better use for their leisure time

KAGAWAD Luisa Imbag (seated, third from right) with Kalipi members

Kalipi's women of substance

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Mandy Navasero

CORAZON Tinio is at the San Isidro Public Market by 6 a.m. three times a week with her selection of *kakanin-tajada* (a concoction of sugar, *buko*, *pinipig* and coconut milk that looked like small *espasol*), *matamis na ube*, *maja blanca*,. *kalamay na may bukayo* and *sago-sago*, among others.

The mother of three is full of energy and cheerful at 7 a.m. in the morning despite having been laboring over a hot stove from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Rosalinda Reyes cooks her *puto, kutsinta* and other *kakanin* from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. and is at her post at the market by 6 a.m. Natividad Medina prepares her *palabok* and *pancit* Malabon from 2 to 5 a.m. and is also at the market by 6 a.m.

Tinio and Medina have been market vendors for more than a decade while Reyes, who also delivers her products to school canteens, has only had her stall for a year.

While no doubt initiative, industry and determination helped, the women are also lucky to have skills and the modest capital needed to start their own businesses, which have considerably augmented the family income. Many women in San Isidro, a predominantly rice-producing municipality, are not as fortunate but just as much in need of additional income to help support families. They marry as early as 17 years old and average five children.

Luisa Imbag, a *barangay kagawad* of Tabon, knew there were women who wanted to spend their idle time in more profitable endeavors rather than gossiping or even small-stake gambling like *tong-its*. She sought the assistance of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and, in 1994, the Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina (Kalipi) was organized (although it would not be formally registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission until two years later). The women then received training in livelihood, leadership and capability-building. After completing the training program, Kalipi received a loan of P100,000 from the DSWD which it distributed in turn to members to start their own income-generating projects.

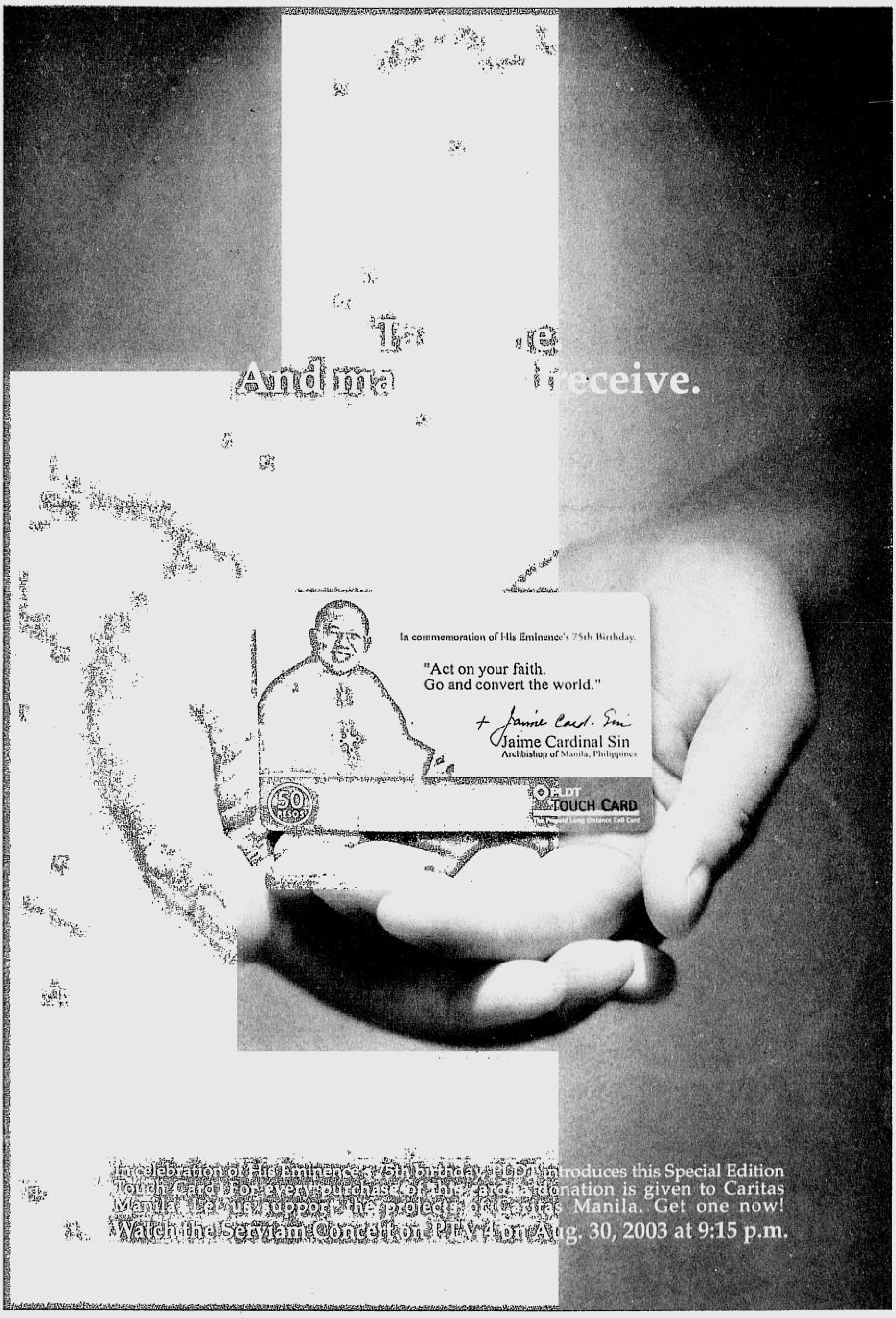
Although the initiative held the promise of providing additional income for the family, attending regular sessions for a certain period of time still proved too much for many women. Out of 200 who initially signed up for Kalipi's program, only 25 completed it, with the others citing domestic responsibilities as the reason for dropping out. For the fraction who did complete the course, however, the sacrifice was well worth it.

Significant contribution

Imbag reported that the DSWD loan had been paid in full and the women had managed to sustain their initial income-generating activities. Kalipi members did different things. Some had now gone into poultry and pig raising with the money they earned from their other activities, to make sure there was no oversupply of the same products in the market. Imbag said Kalipi members earned about P3,000 a month from their money-making ventures, modest by other standards, but a significant contribution to the family income for poor agricultural households.

Chapters of the organization, which had already received several awards, had since been set up in all the barangays of San Isidro with a minimum of 25 members each, who underwent the same training the original group had before they were accepted. Many of the pioneers were now the ones training the new recruits. Imbag said they accepted only those who had the time for and the ability to undergo the training.

KALIPI/ E2



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In celebration of His Eminence's 75th birthday, PLDT introduces this Special Edition Touch Card. For every purchase of this card, a donation is given to Caritas Manila. Let us support the projects of Caritas Manila. Get one now! Watch the Serviam Concert on PTV 4 on Aug. 30, 2003 at 9:15 p.m.

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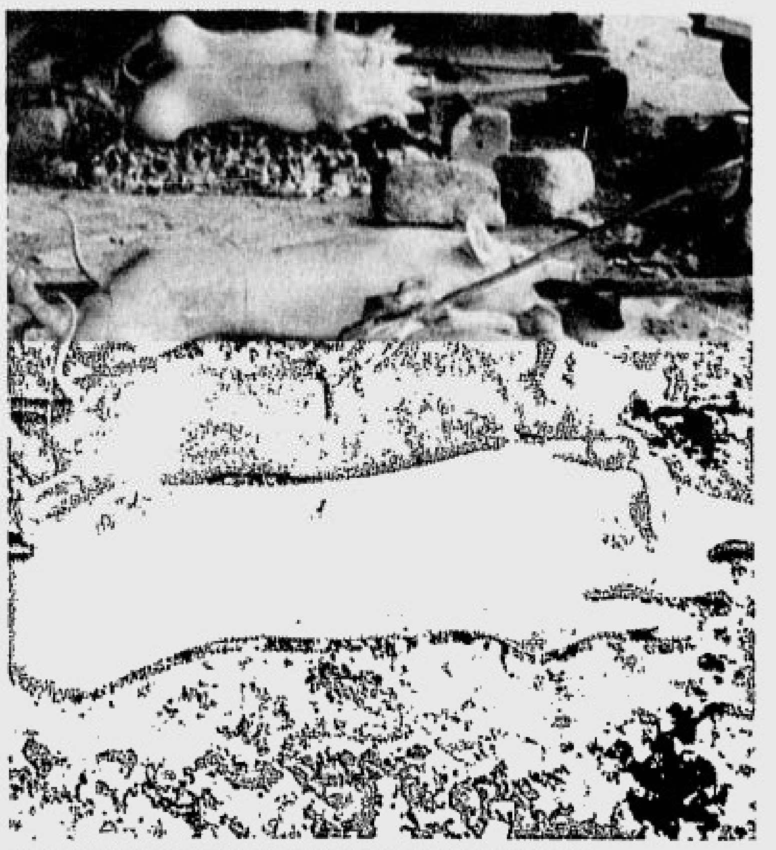
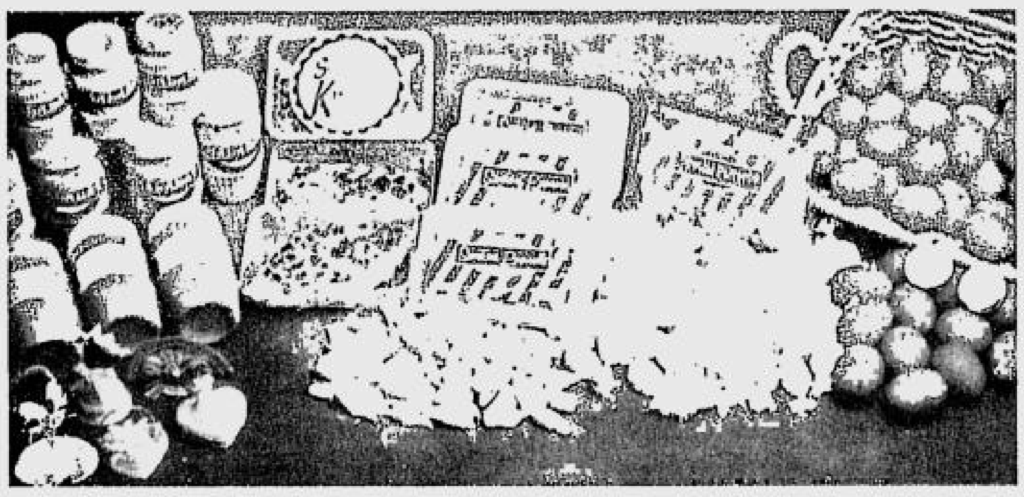
SOME of Nueva Ecija's native *kakanin*



LECHON is a favorite buy for marketgoers on Sunday.



KALIPI now makes peanut butter, *polvoron*, *kakanin* and *itlog na maalat.*

Kalipi's women . . .

From page E1

Through DSWD, the Department of Trade and Industry and even the nearby Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, the women were trained in such livelihood activities as making *polvoron*, instant *salabat*, *espasol*, *itlog na maalat* and Christmas décor, as well as meat processing and dress making. They have also innovated and come out with *malunggay*-flavored *polvoron*. Kalipi is now going into mushroom production through the help of Tirso F. Santiago, municipal agriculture officer.

The women market their products themselves and through the Kalipi. Lucita Tiongson, a market vendor, said she used to source her *itlog na maalat* from outside San Isidro but now that it was produced locally by the Tabon women she did not have to go far for her daily supply and paid less for it.

In addition to the income-generating activities, Kalipi encouraged its members to have herbal gardens in their own homes, plant trees and help Mayor Sonia Lorenzo's Clean and Green campaign, anti-drug program and feeding activities. It has set up a day-care center and organized a parents' congress.

Kalipi also spearheaded the organization of the Farways Multi-purpose cooperative. It is composed of farmers, women, senior citizens and youth, hence the name.

E-mail the author at lbolido@hotmail.com

More (on the menu) for less

By Allison W. Lopez

"WE used to be quite pricey because the menu was dominated by the imported steaks. But with our 18 new dishes, we not only cater to a wider range of pockets now, but a bigger range of palates as well," says Ed de los Reyes, operating partner at Outback Restaurant.

Ideal for a *barkada* food trip (even on a budget), Outback's food and serving portions are actually very American, while its laidback Aussie atmosphere is just right for some animated discussions in-between bites.

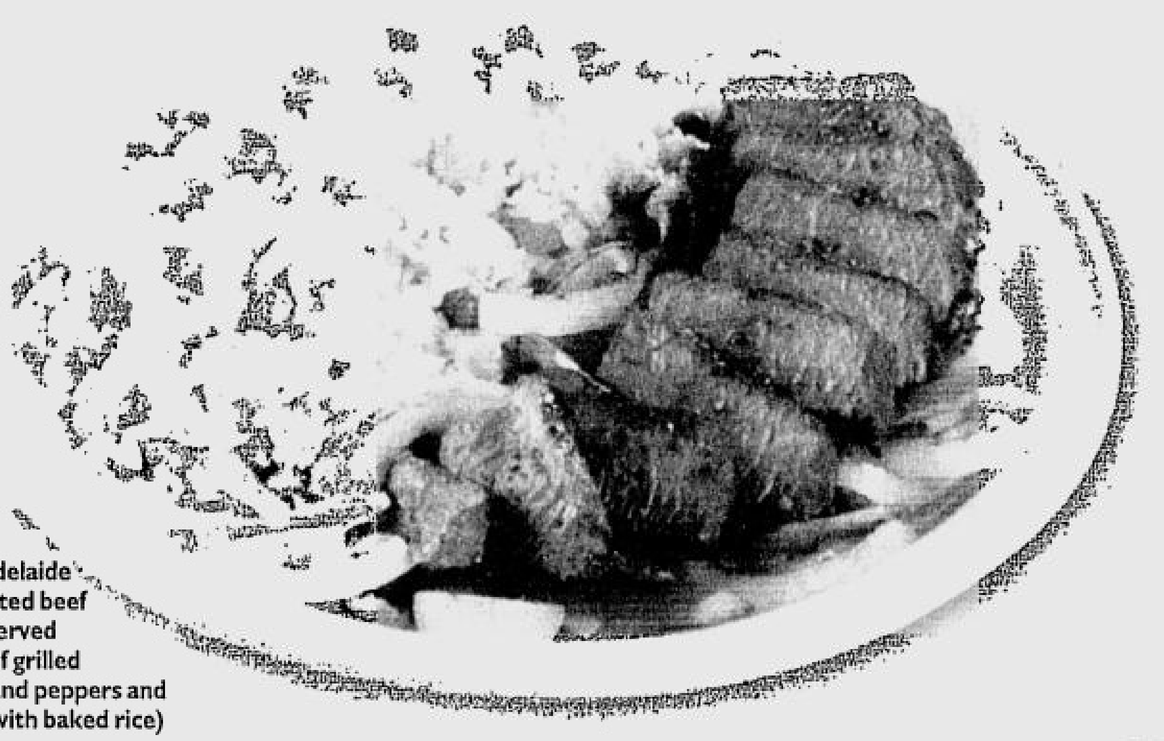
Now it even has a touch of Filipino cuisine with the introduction of the very succulent Grilled Pork Chop. Marinated for exactly 12 hours, not more, not less, this tender piece of meat is the current bestseller among the newbies. At only P365, you get two pieces of big chops marinated in garlic and sweet soy sauce, and served with baked rice and corn salad.

When cooked medium to medium well, it's not too raw, or too dry. Juicy in the right places, the Grilled Pork Chop also has a heavenly counterpart in the Grilled Chicken—both perfect for sharing exquisite bites.

"It's what our customers want," says De los Reyes. "And to show how serious we are about it, there are customer feedback sheets on every table."

You will also find the complimentary Bushman's Bread with special butter on your table to whet your appetite; a bottle of wine is also placed to entice those who love their steak with wine to buy a bottle from the bar.

The menu, meanwhile, has a more visually appealing layout complete with pictures to help out the customer in their food choices.



BEEF Adelaide (marinated beef pieces served on top of grilled onions and peppers and served with baked rice)

Outback has beefed up its offerings with diet-friendly dishes, but its grilled pork chops are a must-try when you're out on a binge

Female-friendly

The new dishes, De los Reyes adds, is now also more "female-friendly," or more "diet-conscious."

"We now have more appetizers, pastas and desserts than the heavy meals that would appeal more to the male customers," he says.

Among the notables are: the Hot Salmon Dip, a baked concoction of salmon, spinach, mushroom, is an addictive cheesy dip served with crusty bread; the Queensland Salad (seasoned chicken salad served on a bed of fresh greens, with Monterey Jack and cheddar cheeses, bacon, chopped egg, tomato, toasted almonds and croutons with side ranch dressing); the crunchy Oriental Chicken Salad (garden fresh salad tossed in Hoisin sesame dressing topped with fried noodles, green peppers, carrots, almonds and Mandarin orange slices and fried chicken strips); and pasta favorite Seafood Linguini (fresh mussels, clams, calamari and shrimp tossed with linguini pasta and home-made tomato sauce).

Among the "middleweight" dishes—filling but not heavy—is the Beef and Shrimp skewers, which is competing with Grilled Pork Chop for the top spot. Served with baked rice and fresh veggies, these marinated beef pieces and seasoned shrimp are grilled just right to suit your seafood and meat cravings.

Lamb, which is usually thought to be expensive, is now reasonably priced with the Lamb Skewers. A definite must-try at P395, two skewers of New Zealand lamb are marinated to make sure no rancid taste remains, and are grilled and served with baked rice and veggies.

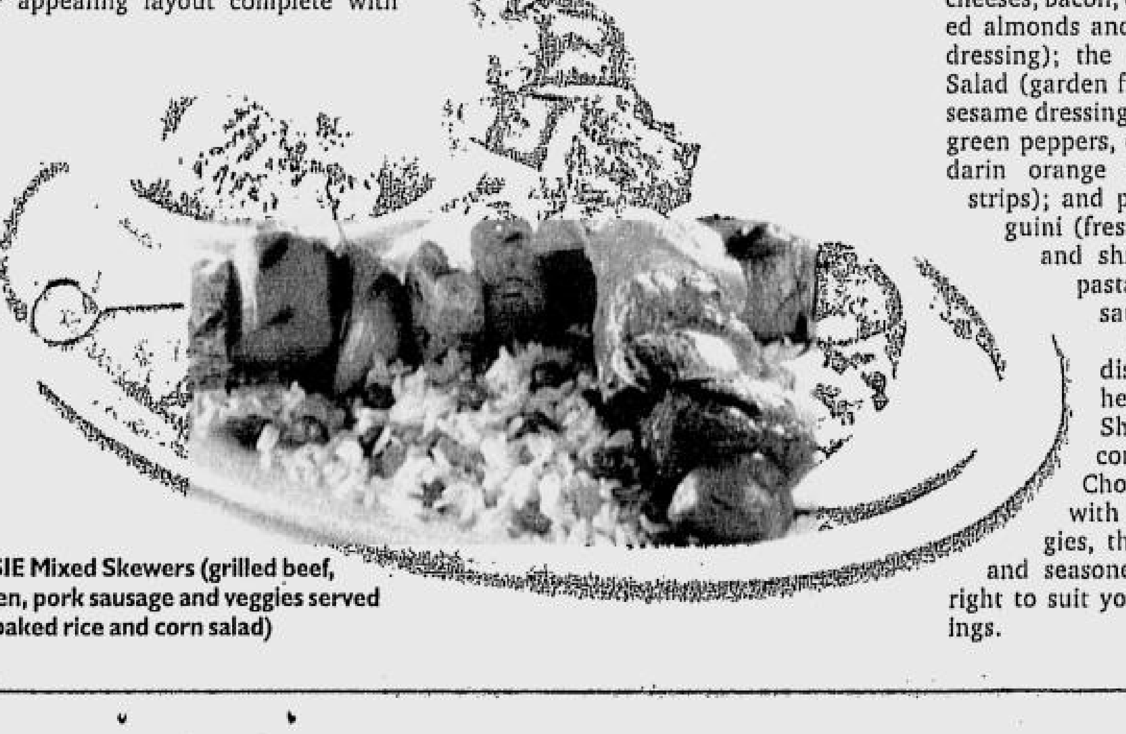
Granny's Apple Pie, an old-fashioned apple pie in a cookie crust that may be taken a la mode, is an ideal end to a satisfying meal.

Outback's good ol' staples are not to be ignored, though—Kookaburra Wings, Chocolate Thunder from Down Under dessert, Aussie steaks, Maine lobster tails, Alaskan king crabs, etc.

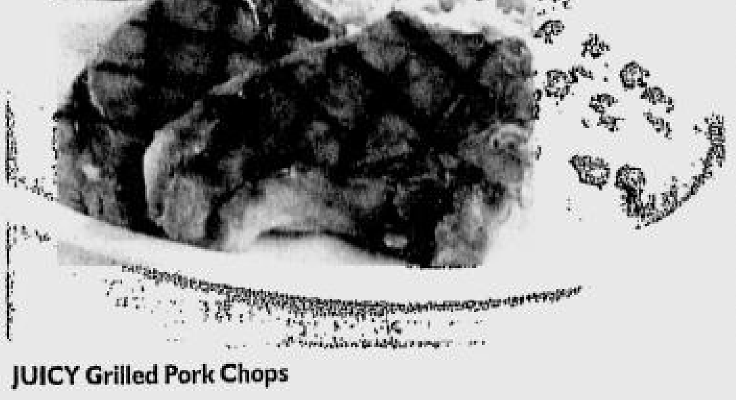
Certainly, there's no need to wait for the holidays to celebrate pleasures such as these.

Outback Restaurant in Glorietta 4 is open daily from 11 a.m. for lunch and dinner. Outback Libis and Alabang Town Center are open from 5 p.m. for dinner only Monday to Thursday; from 11 a.m. for lunch and dinner Friday to Sunday.

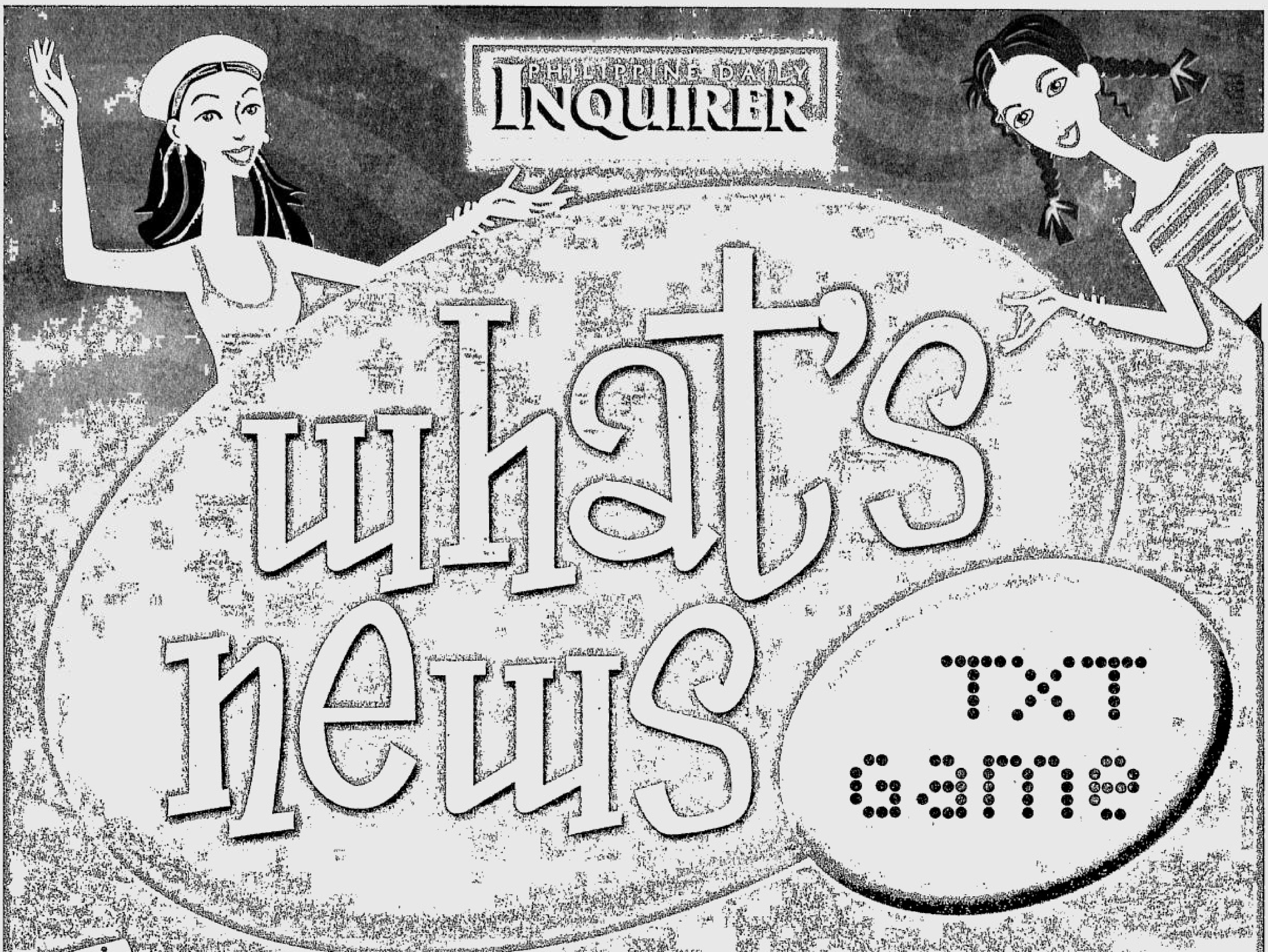
ORIENTAL Chicken Salad

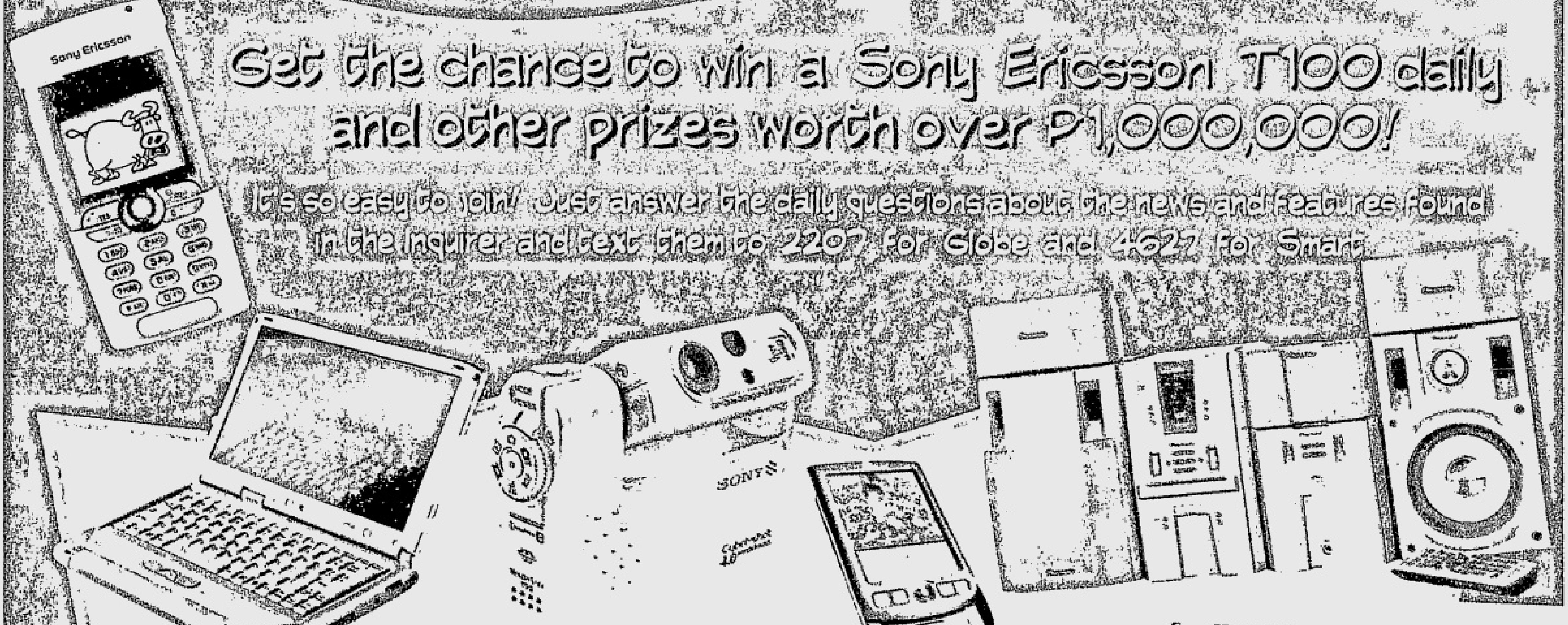


AUSSIE Mixed Skewers (grilled beef, chicken, pork sausage and veggies served with baked rice and corn salad)



JUICY Grilled Pork Chops





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- TO REGISTER: text PDI REG FULL NAME/ADDRESS/BIRTHDAY (Ex. PDI REG Ed Santos/22 Lira St. BF Homes/120873) and send to 2207 for Globe subscribers or 4627 for Smart subscribers. Registration is free.
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- 5 daily multiple-choice questions will be placed in a daily ad published in the Inquirer.
- Questions every Wednesday and Saturday will be taken from the *2bU* and *Saturday Special Super* sections. All other questions will be general questions about youth trivia and the Inquirer.
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- The prize is a SONY ERICSSON T100 MOBILE PHONE.
- There will be SIXTY (60) WINNERS for the total duration of the promo.
- Deadline of entries for the daily draw is from 12:00AM to 11:59PM.
- A DTI representative will be present for the raffle draws.
- Daily winners will be drawn EVERY SATURDAY at The Philippine Daily Inquirer Building, Chino Roces Avenue (Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City at 10:00AM from August 2 to September 27, 2003.
- A participant can only win one daily prize during the promo period.
- A daily prize winner will still be qualified for the grand draw.

GRAND RAFFLE DRAW

- The prize is a TECHIE PACKAGE consisting of:
  - Fujitsu Life Book P1120
  - Palm Zire 71
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  - Sony CTV KVXA29N90
  - Sony Cybershot DSC F-77
  - Sony Ericsson T310 with CommuniCam™
- There will be only ONE (1) WINNER of the Techie package.
- There will be THIRTY-FIVE (35) CONSOLATION PRIZE WINNERS of P10,000 each.
- A participant can only win once in the grand draw. If a name is drawn more than once, he gets the bigger prize.
- Deadline of entries is until 11:59PM of September 24, 2003.
- Grand raffle draw will be aired on Sept. 28, 2003 between 2:30PM to 4:00PM on GMA-7.
- A DTI representative will be present for the grand raffle draw.
- A print ad with the names of all winners will come out in the *2bU* section of the Inquirer on October 1, 2003.
- All winners will be notified via telephone call as well as via registered mail. **Winners are never sent text messages.**
- All winners can claim their prizes at Philippine Daily Inquirer located at Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City.
- All winners must show valid identification (e.g., Drivers license, SSS, etc.) and the SIM card used to participate.
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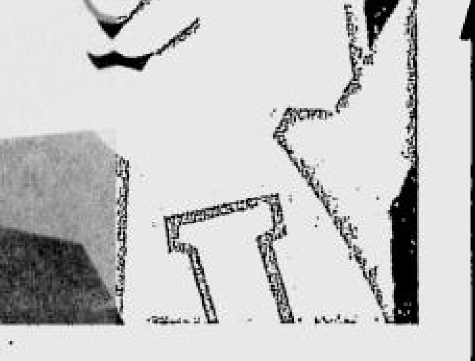
- Employees of Globe Telecommunications, Inc., Smart Communications, Inc.,Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inq7 Interactive, Inc., and Harrison Communications and its agencies, as well as relatives up to second degree the of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining.



Sony Ericsson

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1975 Series of 2003

Saint Nic's cookies

THE JOYFUL COOK

Felice Prudente Sta. Maria

There is another Saint Nic aside from the inspiration for the guy in red suit

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

"IT'S A LITTLE early for shrikes," thought The Joyful Cook. Indeed the distinct *taka-taka-tak* of a *tarat* echoed through her backyard, past the breadfruit tree, past the *makopa* and mango trees, past the papaya and banana clumps, past the water well, past the coconut grove and into a far away bamboo thicket.

The bird's racket reminded her it was time to check the pantry for anise. September is for baking cookies with the image of Saint Nicolas on them. It is also time to check how many tins she has, not only for Saint Nic cookies.

In a long-time family tradition, everyone looks for empty biscuit cans saved throughout the year, cleans them well, and then decorates them with Christmas paper or spray paint for Lola to fill with homemade Christmas cookies in December. So when the Joyful Cook thinks Saint Nicolas of Tolentino, patron of bakers, she also thinks Saint Nicolas of Myra, considered the inspiration for the red-suited, white-bearded Saint Nic.

Italian Nic

"Nicolas of Tolentino's elaborately executed image appears on old and collectible wooden baking cards found around the country," said St. Sandok, the talking spoon TJC had inherited from her Lola Uning. "Where is your antique one? It's a good piece showing the holy friar in his 14th-century Augustinian robes. On polychrome *retablos* he is easily recognized because there is a star above him or on his breast. He carries the lily of virginity and purity or a garlanded crucifix. Sometimes, instead of the lily, he holds a vial filled with money or a bread bun, recalling his assistance to the needy."

"Where was he from?" asked TJC.

"Tolentino is the town in Central Italy where the humble, patient priest from Sant'Angelo died. Canonized in 1446, his patronage was very popular into the next centuries. For elders overtaken by disease the saint was an inspirational model, having continued his mortifications almost to the hour of death.

"His baking card picture is framed by a heart or oval made from fancily etched leaves, scallops and tendrils. His image can be as small as an oyster shell or as large as one's palm. Some baking cards have several designs carved into them so there is no wasted space. There could be a Saint Nic image just for September's holy fiesta, and floral patterns for use anytime. *Araro*-flour cookies sold commercially have similar decorations. Truly antique cards are clearly more finely carved—somewhat resembling lace or the fine embroidery of hankies and *panuelos*—than new ones," Sandok noted.

"Baking cards were used in many European countries, too," TJC said. "As in the Philippines there are reproductions of heirloom cards on the market side by side with the really old ones in countries I've visited. So if you want an antique one, beware."

Symbolic shrikes

"Cookies are readied for a church blessing that continues today in some parishes like San Sebastian in Quiapo and Pasig City every Sept. 10—the day Saint Nicolas went to heaven in 1306 AD. It is also the day when brown shrikes (*Lanius cristatus*) are said to arrive in the Philippines as they migrate from China and Japan to escape the snow, freezing temperatures and absence of food. On through April, a garden in many agricultural areas, villages and towns can become haven for the noisy winged visitors. Thus in the Philippines, his (St. Nic's) image is shown holding a shrike," Sandok explained.

The brown bird is gray-headed, white-chested. It measures about 17 centimeters and is very territorial. It even defends its winter quarters from native resident birds.

The Joyful Cook assembled wheat flour, finest white sugar, cornstarch, butter, egg yolks, coconut milk and grains of anise. After mixing the ingredients she rolled the batter into a sheet, then using a heart or scalloped oval shaped cutter made individual biscuits that were stamped with the impression on the antique baking card.

Making cookies the old-fashion way requires patience, since each is handmade. But the fragrance of coconut and anise mingling in the oven is a singular delight from the past. It makes any kitchen smell so comfortable and loving.

Faithful devotees of St. Nic have their cookies blessed by the Roman Catholic priest at church. The cookies—called *pan, panecitos*, or *panecillos*—are eaten to cure an ailment, and are even crushed and put in cultivated fields so they would be fertile. In areas where bakers have lost their cards, common *pan de sal* is substituted. However the bread does not last as long as the cookie.

Asian Nic

"Isn't Santa Claus Asian?" asked Sandok with a naughty wink?

"Saint Nicolas, bishop of Myra, is the earlier of the namesakes, having lived in the fourth century. He attended the Council of Nicaea that produced the Nicene Creed. Myra is in Asia Minor and was a center of Christianity until the Crusades when it became predominantly Muslim. It is where the saint was born and where he died and was buried in his cathedral. In unsettled times, his relics were moved to Bari in Italy.

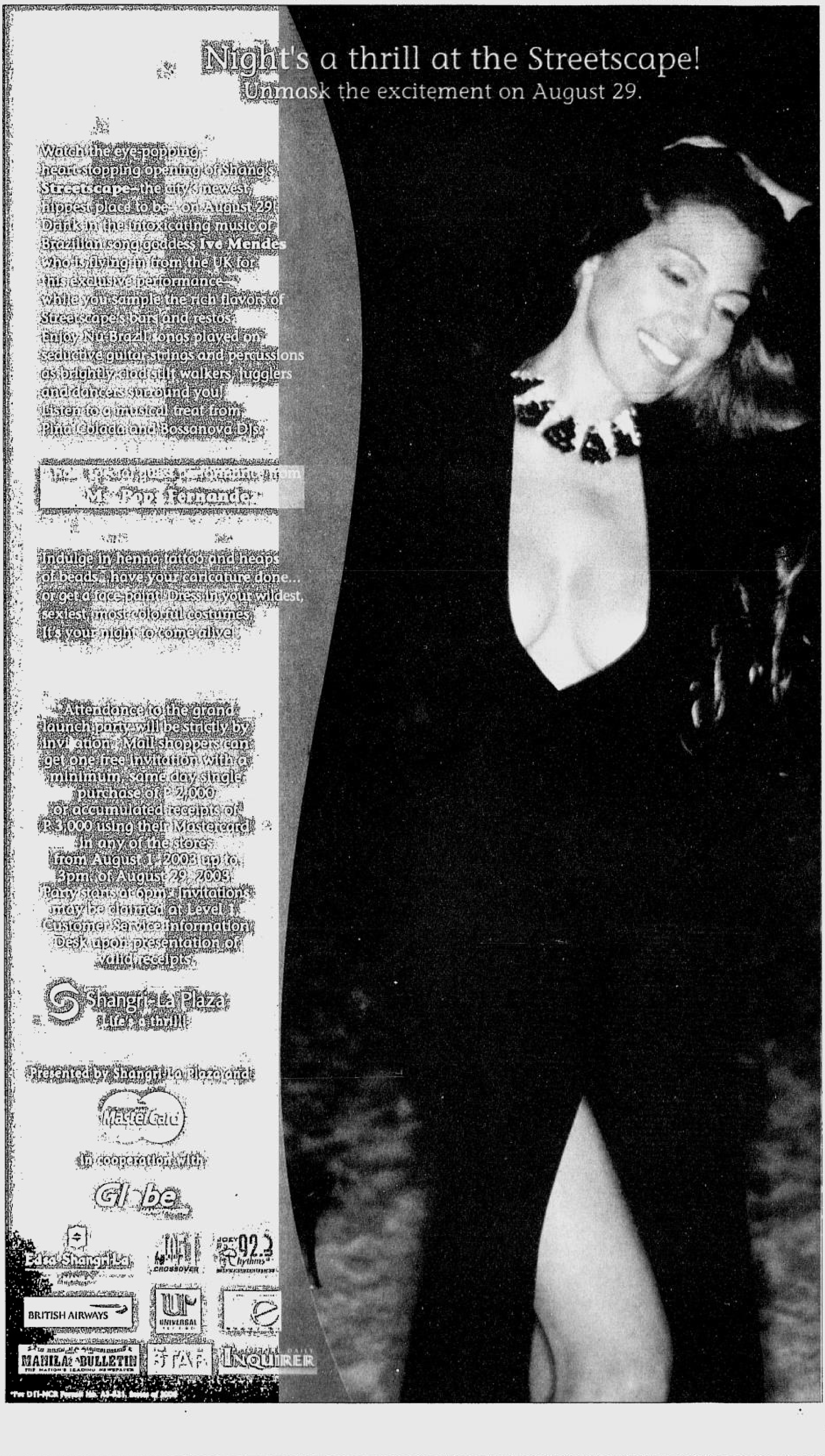
"Nicolas may have been orphaned young, but he was well provided for by his parents. He promised to use his inheritance to help others. One story says that he secretly threw a bag of gold each time a daughter of one poor man at Patra reached marriageable age. Perhaps the story is what made Santa Claus a gift giver. As with most holy figures from ancient times, fact and fiction are meshed and indistinguishable from each other.

"The bishop passed away on Dec. 6, making his festival of faith a prelude to Christmas. Dutch Protestants of New America are said to have translated Saint Nicolas to Sint Klaes and then to Santa Claus. Later Father Christmas arrived in England," TJC remembered.

If The Joyous Cook made the family's best Pan de San Nicolas, Lola made the best Christmas cookies. The Joyous Cook decided that she had to master her grandmother's recipe so the aromas of vanilla, almond and butter would waft through the house in December, just as anise and coconut milk did in August.

"Cheers to both Saint Nics!" thought Sandok as a sheet of newly baked *panecitos* emerged from the oven.

Next: The Nose Knows



Night's a thrill at the Streetscape!
Unmask the excitement on August 29.

Watch the eye-popping, heart-stopping opening of Shang's **Streetscape**—the city's newest, hippest place to be—on August 29! Drink in the intoxicating music of Brazilian song goddess **Ive Mendes** who is flying in from the UK for this exclusive performance—while you sample the rich flavors of Streetscape's bars and restos. Enjoy Nu-Brazil songs played on seductive guitar strings and percussions as brightly clad stilt walkers, jugglers and dancers surround you! Listen to a musical treat from Pina Colada and Bossanova DJs.

[illegible] from
M. Pop Fernandez

Indulge in henna tattoo and heaps of beads... have your caricature done... or get a face-paint! Dress in your wildest, sexiest, most colorful costumes. It's your night to come alive!

Attendance to the grand launch party will be strictly by invitation. Mall shoppers can get one free invitation with a minimum, same day single purchase of P 2,000 or accumulated receipts of P 3,000 using their Mastercard in any of the stores from August 1, 2003 up to 3pm of August 29, 2003. Party starts at 6pm. Invitations may be claimed at Level 1 Customer Service Information Desk upon presentation of valid receipts.

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